

# Sale of autograph letters and MSS

Sarah Bradford

At Christie's, London, on February 23, the final curtain rang down upon the duel of wits between those titanic theatrical egos, George Bernard Shaw and Mrs Patrick Campbell. "Mrs Pat" was the first to be sent for sale by her grandson, including ten which were hitherto unpublished and seven only partly published.

Shaw's relationship with Stella Campbell was, as his biographer Michael Holroyd points out, unique in his later life. In contrast to his customary sexual shadow-boxing, Shaw was physically attracted to Mrs Patrick Campbell, although he later "covered up" this un-Shavian lapse by commenting "In this relationship I was acting as well that I forgot I was acting at all." He was fifty-five and his voluptuous, maddening enchantress forty-four when he fell in love with her in the summer of 1912. The actress was ill and confined to her house, the playwright an assiduous visitor and, as appears in an unpublished, undated pencil note in the correspondence, they indulged in some teasing kissing and cuddling in an armchair by the fire. Shaw was infatuated:

And I love you for ever and ever, Stella. And I agree that when you are well we shall be Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Patrick Campbell; for Stella means only Stella; but Mrs. Patrick Campbell will mean my treasure, my darling, my beloved, adored, ensnared friend of my very soul. Oh, before you go, my Stella, I clasp you to my heart "with such a strained purity".

Stella responded to these effusions by calling him "Joey" after the clown in the pantomime, but, as far as Shaw was concerned, the purity of his designs became ever more strained until at Sandwick, in August 1913, he appeared at Stella's hotel intent upon seduction. Stella, who had already slammed the door in the face of his

passion in London in June, turned him down finally by fleeing the hotel, leaving a curt note. "Joey" was the name she gave to the younger, well-connected George Cornwallis-West whom she was to marry a year later as her second husband.

But as the years went by the tables were turned. Shaw became increasingly prosperous; Stella, having lost her looks and her husband, was in constant need of money and attempted to capitalize on her relationship with Shaw. At first she demanded parts in his plays which he was not prepared to give her; he refused to allow her to play Hesione Hushabye in *Heartbreak House* although the character was modelled upon her, while he showered her with well-merited criticism when she went over the top as an elderly Eliza in Viola Tree's revival of *Pygmalion* in 1920.

Their fiercest running battles were fought over Stella's attempts to turn Shaw's love letters to her into cash, first using them to spice her memoirs, then trying to sell them for publication. At first Shaw, visualizing a few innocuous passages, offered to help; but when he realized the full extent of Stella's intended revelations he was appalled. "You say you will behave like a perfect gentleman," he wrote furiously, "Well, a gentleman does not kiss and tell; so that settles that." Neither of the two parties were "nature's gentlemen"; Shaw's scruples arose from his fear of his wife's reactions. Charlotte Shaw did not like Mrs Campbell and was easily roused to fury on the subject; her husband descended to minutiae in the cuts which he demanded to avert her wrath. From a typescript copy of passages to be cut from the memoirs it appears that the excisions included such apparently uncontroversial stuff as his report from Bad Kissingen on July 3, 1912, that Charlotte and her sister "slept heavily" and that Charlotte was worried about her weight. All his precautions, however, came to nothing when the

New York *Herald* published the memoirs uncut in May 1922, and one can sympathize with Shaw when he wrote to Stella several years later:

If you knew the trouble those unlucky letters made for me you would understand a lot of things. I don't regret it; and it doesn't matter as it got you out of your difficulties for a moment; but O Lord, Stella, it mustn't happen again until we are both dead. Then we can be added to Heloise and Abelard and all the rest of them.

Stella, impecunious and alone, had no such inhibitions; cash present in the hand was of more moment than posthumous romantic fame. "The other day a publisher valued the letters at £10,000 and the publishing rights at £20,000," she wrote to Shaw on July 14, 1931. "What arrangements can we make, you and I? You know I am to be trusted." With ample evidence of her trustworthiness, Shaw cabled back: "Publication impossible. Sell letters keeping copies if you must but after Terry and Harris neither I nor the market can bear any more." Shaw was determined that the letters should not be published in full until after his and Charlotte's deaths, but he was generous enough to send Stella's letters back to her so that she could sell the complete correspondence for the benefit of her grandchildren. Mrs Pat, however, predeceased him, dying impoverished at Pau in 1940, aged seventy-two, alone but for the last and best-loved of her tiny dogs, Moonbeam. "and it is my desire," she stipulated in her will, "should the copyright be free or permission obtained... should be published in an independent volume to be entitled 'The Love Letters of Bernard Shaw to Mrs Patrick Campbell' so that all who may read them will realize that the friendship was 'L'innité amoureuse'." Twelve years after her death the correspondence was published but Stella still did not get her way. The title

of the volume was a cautious and unexceptionable *Bernard Shaw and Mrs Patrick Campbell: Their Correspondence* (edited by Alan Dent, Gollancz, 1952).

Stella's descendants withheld from publication the letters which dealt with her disastrous second marriage to George Cornwallis-West, ten years her junior, who married her in 1914 after his divorce from Jennie Churchill and deserted her in 1919. Apart from the coyly teasing note mentioned above, they relate to her second husband's cruelty and her reaction to Shaw's exploitation of her experiences as Orintha in *The Apple Cart*: "it was agonizing - I am not yet old enough to look back on it as a joke," she wrote; and on July 12, 1929: "You hit below the belt when you juggle with gossip about my dead son; it damns you as nothing else can." Stung, Shaw noted in pencil on the margin that he was thinking of "two reproaches, sons of beautiful actresses", not of Stella's. Beo, "though he too was not a Vicar of Wakefield. Think what it is for a boy to have such a mother?" And so the punching and counter-punching continued until the protagonists were eighty-three and seventy-four. The letters were finally sold, as he wished, for the benefit of her grandson whom he called the "Lord Chancellor" (£7,560 to Christopher Wood).

The sale also included a major and largely unpublished collection of letters by Somerset Maugham to his friend, the painter Sir Gerald Kelly. Kelly, a handsome Irishman of considerable artistic talent and interesting bohemian associations, first met Maugham in the summer of 1904. Maugham, according to his biographer, Ted Morgan, took to him at once; not only because he was unconventional and an artist but also because he was short like himself. Maugham took a generous interest in Kelly, loading him with artistic and practical advice and even funding his trip to Burma in 1908. In return the gregarious Kelly introduced him to the

Anglo-American artistic circle which met in an upstairs room at the Châ de Blanc café in Montparnasse, a fertile ground for ideas and characters in Maugham novels. Kelly himself was the original of Lawsaw in *Of Human Bondage*.

Kelly remained one of Maugham's closest friends and in the correspondence, mainly dating from 1904-20, Maugham discussed his own professional successes and difficulties, including those with *The Magician*, rejected at the instance of a shocked partner of Methuen's who read it and countermanded its publication although it was already set up in type; and with *The Explorer* - another cynical attempt at pot-boiling, this time on the Kipling bandwagon. Maugham worshipped money but was also capable of gagging in the process, writing to Kelly of *The Explorer* on March 25, 1907: "I vomited daily at the exalted scotisms that issued from their lips, & my hair stood on end at the delicacy of their sense of humor." In that year Kelly painted the object of his friend's happiest heterosexual love, Ethelwyn Sylvia Jones, the original of Rosie in *Cakes and Ale*. Maugham kept Rosie's identity secret all his life; Kelly was the first to reveal it, under conditions of the strictest secrecy, to the writer Richard Cordell in 1939: "All I know is that they had a very happy love affair together," he wrote. "And then after a while I think Maugham became aware of her promiscuous nature. Whether they quarrelled and quarrelled, or whether he left her, or she left him, I neither know nor care. She was one of the most delightful women I have ever known. I thought her wonderfully beautiful but she had one failing." Kelly painted several portraits of Maugham who might have married "Rosie" but for that weakness. Instead Maugham married Syrie Wellcome and the traces of that tortured marriage are seen in this correspondence in the form of a fierce tirade against her. The collection was bought, again by Christopher Wood, for £6,480.

# TLS

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FRIDAY 18 MARCH 1983 No 4,172 50p

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## Arthur among his peers

John Bayley

NORMAN PAGE (Editor)

Tennyson: Interviews and Recollections  
202pp. Macmillan. £17.50.  
0 33 28740 1

Genius can coexist with, and as it were make use of, any kind of personality; but that personality must somehow be experienced - "burned through" in Keats's phrase - in the productions of genius. In the case of Mozart, Raphael, or Shakespeare, it is hard to know whether the personality through which genius emerged was present in any sense to the artist himself. But in general the artist makes a conscious and cunning use of what he knows himself to be like. Goethe exploits his own abasement - characteristics which in a man without genius would be merely and comically common-place. "My writings may be genital," wrote Pushkin to a lady-friend, "but my heart is completely vulgar." The dazzling play of their vulgarly unregarded and personalized everything he wrote.

Self-acceptance and self-experience are more important to genius than self-knowledge. Pushkin's awareness of Mozart, subtly expressed to that little dramatic poem *Mozart and Salieri* (blown up into a tragedy in Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*) shows experience of the self converted instantly into art before it becomes self-knowledge. Such knowledge, like aesthetic delight, is left to the audience. Genius is able to exploit itself in whatever form that self happens to take - good, bad or merely banal - most usually a mixture of each; but when a worthless or odious self happens to predominate (Celine, Montherlant, William Burroughs) it is the defects themselves which skill must concentrate and carry to the limit and beyond. What distinguished such robust writers from the "nasties" of today is precisely their reliance on the truth of their personalities. Contemporary artificers of fantasy, technicians of the pornographic day-dream, do not possess one, or at least do not reveal one. They are professionals who do not know how to put themselves whole into what they write. They lack the deep instinct of coincidence.

And it is this which was also lacking to our two greatest nineteenth-century poets, Tennyson and Browning, who resembled each other more than they contrasted. In both there was total disjunction between their literary powers and their personal selves. On occasion Browning implicitly claims kinship with Shakespeare: who did not "unlock his heart" in the Sonnets or anywhere else, and would have been "the less Shakespeare" if he had. But this misses the point entirely. For James there was an unbridgeable gap between the Browning of the poems and the Browning of the dinner-table. James, like Shakespeare himself, lived in and through what he wrote; Browning lived outside it. In invoking the Shakespeare of the Sonnets he mistook anonymity for non-presence: Shakespeare is present in his sonnets, James in his novels, as neither Browning nor Tennyson are in their poems.

Stanford also remarks on the raven-black hair "without a streak of white" in it that Tennyson kept to the end of his life. Can that really be so? Wasn't there a bottle of dye or tinting substance at hand? In earlier life after all, and to his friends' amusement, he had paid a professional lady to pull out dead hairs at ten shillings a time.

His vanity, so open and childlike, was transposed in art at the level of a social and historical fantasy. In 1867 he told the Irish poet William Allingham that the Arthur epic had been "all in my mind" and could have been done without any trouble, had it not been for Sterling's sceptical review in the *Quarterly* of the "Morte d'Arthur" pilot piece. "The king is the complete man, the knights are the passions". James Knowles was told much the same thing. This dismissive explanation suggests a deep level of much less conscious image of himself as Arthur presiding at the dinner-table among a gaily fellowship of noble knights. The poet as Arthur holds the secret of romance but takes no part in the adventures, knowing also the sad end of the story and the passing in the barge. Tennyson's passionate belief in and hope of immortality ("If I didn't believe in that, I'd go down immediately and jump off Richmond Bridge") found its chief image in the idea of rescue by water.

More important, perhaps, he came alive in company; it was the justification for himself and his poetry, as the fellowship was for the persona of Arthur; and again one is struck by the contrast with such a poet as Keats, whose personality is immanent and dramatic in his poetry, but who ceased to exist, as he said, in a social scene. Tennyson, often called a "poet among men", had the royal touch without effort, and one of the notes, in the manner of Aubrey, which Jowett left about his friend was "He ought always to have lived among gentlemen only" - gentlemen of all ranks no doubt. But genius rarely needs to live like that.

If W. F. Rensley reports correctly, Tennyson was himself aware of a contemporary "fellowship" aspect in the *Idylls*, but he did not identify with Arthur, quoting Lancelot's reply to Elaine's brother, who had called him "the great Lancelot":

In me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not great:  
There is the man

pointing to the king. "When I wrote that," said Tennyson, "I was thinking of myself and Wordsworth." Rensley rightly calls it a fine compliment, but elsewhere in the poem there is no doubt with whom the poet naturally identifies; and the identification takes

As in a picture  
which like so much in the *Idylls* is incongruous with its subject but highly congruous with the childlike image of Tennyson-Arthur, rapt in a succession of marvellous sounds and pictures. William Allingham fondly recalls him peering at a great golden gorse-bush taller than himself: "I have the picture in my mind." The picture goes with the single line unit, and also with the pondered accuracy, which can be either immediate or arcane. H. D. Rensley reports that Tennyson had been asked "times out of mind" what he meant by the lines in *Maud*:

For her feet have touched the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy  
And had explained impatiently that a lady's dress brushing over the flowers reveals the red fringe of their under-petals. Very true. The birds who cried "Maud Maud Maud Maud" in the high hall garden were of course rooks, as he scornfully told a gushing girl who thought they were nightingales. But Rensley caught him on the line in *In Memoriam*: "Flits by the sea-blue bird of March." "What bird?" "A kingfisher of course." "But kingfishers don't flit." "True," admitted the bird in some discomposure, and he remained silent while Rensley propounded the ludicrous idea that he must have meant a blue-flit, which unquestionably flits. "Make it a tit then," said Tennyson smiling, "though I have told many people that it was a kingfisher."

All such anecdotes emphasize the as it were conversational aspect of his poetry, that it was something shared. The point about conversation is that it says nothing of importance but creates the communal feel, the art practised together when there is nothing to say, and it was a jocular observation of Tennyson that for all he was a fine poet he had nothing to say, and must beg themes of his friends. It is an odd form of egalitarianism only found in hierarchical societies, hero-worshippers at the round table. One could speculate that Tennyson's absolute recognition of Wordsworth's greatness arose from the fact that Wordsworth could turn the whole of nature and thought, feeling and perceptible, into Words-

worth the "egotistical sublime", and this was something Tennyson could not do. But paradoxically because he could not do it, because he made purely external sounds and pictures, longings and emotions, he had a more democratic following and was a more popular poet than Wordsworth could have been. Even his most elevated poetry is really a disguised poetry of occasion; the Catholic theologian Wilfred Ward noted his taste for the "Tiresias" dedication, "The Daisy" and the invitation to F. D. Maurice, which he said were what the French call "belles comme la prose".

There is a sense in fact in which all Tennyson's characteristically effects are as "beautiful as prose", as beautiful, say, as the best sentences in *Madame Bovary*. His own favourite line, referred to in several conversations, was "The mellow oasel fluted from the elm", which is not only a consistently perfect but perfectly minute of the sound described. Yet it has none of the mysterious inner life of great poetry, the life, for instance, that transforms the blackbirds of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire at the end of Edward Thomas's "Adlestrop". When Tennyson told Rensley that the public "would have been just as pleased if I had written 'the merry blackbird sang among the trees', he was quite wrong. The public may not understand the intimacies of poetry but they know a perfect thing when they hear and see it, and most Tennyson effects, particularly the later ones, are public, and taken to the public's heart for this reason.

Wilfred Ward has a delightful account of Tennyson reading "Vastness" before publishing it in *Macmillan's Magazine*. Love for the maiden crowned with marriage, Debtless competence, comely child, Happy household, sober and clean. His hearers smiled very visibly at the last words, Tennyson looked up. "Why are you laughing?" he asked. "If we laughed perhaps others might laugh," was ventured. "True," he said, and closed his book. Next day he called us, and read as follows: Household happiness, gracious child, Debtless competence, golden mean. "Next day he called us" is the authentic

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# Illuminating Caledonian virtue

Adam Mars-Jones

ALASDAIR GRAY  
Unlikely Stories, Mostly  
276pp. Edinburgh: Canongate. £7.50.  
0 86241 029 0

Although he unleashed his first book, the massive novel *Lanark*, only two years ago, Alasdair Gray is not a new writer, nor exclusively a writer. The opening tale of *Unlikely Stories, Mostly* was first published in *Collins Magazine for Boys and Girls* in 1951, and Gray has worked (always in Glasgow) mainly as a portrait painter and muralist.

This new volume is gloriously decked out with imaginative touches, from the spine of the jacket, which shows dogs and women being rather too friendly, to an erratum slip which reads: "This slip has been inserted by mistake". The author's biography on the back flap has been turned into a minimalist found poem by the subtraction from its structure of all personal details: "He was . . . and educated . . . and became . . .". The front cover has been embellished with a pleasing pattern of recurring thistles and the motto: WORK AS IF YGUWERE LIVING IN THE EARLY DAYS OF A BETTER NATION. The back of the jacket purports to reproduce reviews of the book from the *Shinla Times* and the *Celtic Needlewoman*, while the front endpapers contain a series of dedications in tiny script. One near the end reads: "Smith of Glenlivet is a maker of excellent malt whisky, and a generous dispenser of it to those illumine intellectual suns who can flammate its virtues."

Clearly Gray has drunk deep of the Caledonian virtues, and his book contrives to be both lavish and thrifty; paper is too expensive not to cover it minutely with jokes and ideas. There is something in him of his character McMenamy, who noticed that his Granny, knitting as she rocked, soaked as she knitted, comprised two sources of energy, only one of which was being tapped and turned to profit.

Gray's energy as an artist has not been left untapped by this volume; the text is larded with illustrations and devices, which owe something to Eric

Gill and something, as the Acknowledgements page points out, to the work of "Paul Klee, Michelangelo, Raphael, Piranesi, G. Glover, W. Blake, E. H. Shepherd and a Japanese artist whose name has no agreed phonetic equivalent in Roman type."

Gray has always been scrupulous to the point of parody in this matter of acknowledging his sources; *Lanark* includes an index of plagiarisms, and even proposes a typology of literary theft: "BLOCK PLAGIARISM, where someone else's work is printed as a distinct typographical unit, EMBEDDED PLAGIARISM, where stolen words are concealed within the body of the narrative, and DIFFUSE PLAGIARISM, where scenery, characters, action or novel ideas have been stolen without the original words describing them. To save space these will be referred to hereafter as Blockplag, Implag and Difplag."

*Unlikely Stories, Mostly* has fewer debts to acknowledge, but nevertheless gives away the credit for the last two stories, "A Likely Story in a Nonmarital Setting" and "A Likely Story in a Domestic Setting" (which contain five lines each) almost in toto.

Apart from this fleeting Blockplag, *Unlikely Stories, Mostly* relies mainly on Difplag; the most impressive stories, "Five Letters from an Eastern Empire" and the pair of fables about the "Axletree" are announced as "decorative expansions of what Kafka outlined perfectly in 'The City Coat of Arms' and 'The Great Wall of China'."

This is a great deal too modest, as perhaps we are meant to suspect. "Five Letters", in particular, has a subtle perfection of formal development which raises it far above any "decorative expansion". The letters ("describing etiquette government irrigation education clogs kites rumour poetry justice massage town-planning sex and ventriloquism in an obsolete

nation") are from a tragic poet in a new capital to his parents in the old one, but the sheer reception of the relationship between them changes a number of times, as the status of "a letter to one's parents" in the culture it describes becomes more clear. Poets are made not born, and being deprived of their parents at an early age is part of the training. Only the emperor can give a poet a worthy subject. The old capital has been destroyed, and with it the poet's parents, by order of the emperor. The poet is given his subject: he must celebrate the destruction of the old capital. The tone of the story remains under perfect control as it darkens and deepens, until an apparently reckless comedy has become a cruel parable about power and meaning.

"Five Letters from an Eastern Empire" towers above the other stories as much as Bohu the tragic poet towers over Tohu the comic poet, whose ceremonial clogs are barely ten inches thick. Some of the early stories, naturally enough, are lightweight, and "Logopandocry", Gray's pastiche of Urquhart, which takes him beyond his historical death in 1660, is self-defeatingly good; Urquhart decides to deploy, for the purposes of his diary, a style "less ornate, magnificent, and quodlibetically rollicking than is proper to my public emissions" and after a few pages the reader, unable to distinguish much past the coupled convergent apertures of his elliptical nose-thrills, is likely to be calling weakly for Hemingway.

*Unlikely Stories, Mostly*, in spite of its unevenness, is an impressive, playful and beautiful book; its author may be a painter before he is a writer, but this is only a disadvantage in portfogging matters like the spelling of "cheque" trousers or "hoards" of bears. If all artists had as much heat in their back-burners as Alasdair Gray has in his, we would have a tiny Renaissance on our hands.

## Spanning the old and the new age

J. C. McGaskarth

JESSIE KESSON  
Glitter of Mica  
156pp. Edinburgh: Paul Harris.  
£6.95.  
0 86228 0214

Paul Harris's Scottish Fiction Reprint Library is one of the best things to have emerged from publishing in Scotland in recent years. So far the series has revived work which is in some cases merely forgotten, but in others largely unknown, by Edwin Muir, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, R. B. Cunningham Graham and Ian MacPherson. Jessie Kesson's *The White Bird Passes* was the first title when it began in 1979, and now her second novel, *Glitter of Mica*, is added to it.

Jessie Kesson is a novelist in the anti-Kailyard tradition of Grassie Gibbon, and this novel shares many of the preoccupations of *A Scots Quair*, but although her characters inhabit roughly the same territory as Grassie Gibbon's, she is in no sense a slavish disciple; her treatment of the passing of an "old Scotland" and all its attendant themes, is vibrant.

*Glitter of Mica* is set in the county of Aberdeen, in the imaginary parish of Caldwell, a place which has moved neither poet to song nor tourist to praise. It is a parish of "strictly puritanical Free Kirk, and although the church itself is now used for storing grain, rather than for worship, its presence is still a reality in Caldwell, echoing stubbornly in place names such as the Free Kirk Wood. The truly dominating presence in the lives of the modern parishioners, however, is Ambrogian House, a mental hospital.

The sullen (what there is of it) concerns Hugh Riddle and his daughter Helen, who succumbs to the "loveless" and therefore "treacherous" desire of Charlie Anson, perhaps the parish's most singular representative of spiritless New Man. Helen pays for her lack of judgement with more than just her maidenhood, and the book closes

in a kind of gloomy celebration of the persistence and determination of those closest to her. These events are enacted against a complex pattern designed to reveal the workings of the human heart in conflict with memory, the passing of time, death, the irreversibility of a certain way of life and a means for interpreting that life.

Hugh Riddle's own life has spanned both the old and the new age. The long recollection with which the book opens — entailing the day-to-day activity of his family, their working methods, songs, habits, customs — is projected from a traveller's nervous breakdowns, commercial women whose man appear to care little for what they are doing or whom they are doing it with. This last category, incidentally, includes not only Hugh's wife, Ida, but also his slutish mistress,

who, as William Donaldson remarks rather charmingly in his useful introduction, is one of the author's many alter egos. "Knowing your place", to Hugh, can also mean security and the comfort of permanence.

A no less important manifestation of the changes occurring in the community is the people's use of language. "Take Charlie Anson now," one woman says to another. "Until you were appointed Treasurer of the Farm-Workers' Union, you would have given him a second thought? And now the man was taking himself seriously. Speaking English! As if he had never learned a word of Scots, or else was ashamed of it." Anson is also given a talk at the Cultural Society, entitled "Words Your Heritage"; the final proof of his alienation from the

## Elucidating the dirt

James Hunter

LEWIS GRASSIE GIBBON  
The Speak of the Mearns  
112pp. The Ramsay Head Press, 36 North Castle Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3BW. £8.50. 0 902859 75 7

To be "the speak" of North-east Scotland's rural communities is to have attracted the gossip that follows notions of conform to restricted notions of acceptable behaviour. To write novels set in a place and then that kind of propriety, especially if these involve deal in the sort of cruelties their characters and their local critics might have labelled "dirt". Lewis Grassie Gibbon's *Sunset Song* is such a novel. *The Speak of the Mearns*, barely started at Gibbon's death in 1935 and now published for the first time, would have been another.

Born in 1901 and brought up on a small croft in the Howe of the Mearns, that narrow swathe of fertile farmland

between the Cairngorm foothills and the North Sea, James Leslie Mitchell or Lewis Grassie Gibbon created in *Sunset Song* a novel which came at least as close as any other to elucidating the peculiar complexities of modern Scotland, an ancient nation bereft of a state, its people confronting a world in which the necessary prelude to social and economic advancement has been to cut themselves off from their own culture, their own history, even their own language.

Gibbon knew that process well; just how well is revealed by the experience of Chris Guthrie, the heroine of *Sunset Song*, making her own hard choices in the Mearns of the 1920s when, within the wider context of a Scotland at odds with itself, the orphans who had first cultivated "the load" were being displaced by "muckle farmers" and the more "intensive" farming represented by these foreigners of the modern "agri-businessman". Gibbon's precise portrayal of the place from whence he came was one of the strengths of *Sunset Song*, making that novel truer to its setting than its successors in the *Scotts Quair* trilogy, one of which is set in a small

society which produced him.

*Glitter of Mica* is a dense, and poetic and complex, and very Scottish. Where it falters is in the treatment of plot — which depends too often on old-fashioned devices such as suspenseful chapter endings, out of place in a novel whose technique is otherwise so modernist — and a disconcerting suggestion of cosiness (less evident here than in *The White Bird Passes*) is characteristic.

William Donaldson claims that *Glitter of Mica* "stands in the highest traditions of European fiction". That's probably going too far. But if it is enough, anyway, to say that a Scottish novel is back to print, it is a complaint about the publisher's advertisement for this series. "Back to print" carries a full bibliography; it has I have yet to see one.

manufacturing town and the other a larger, elly. Despite his Marxist inclinations, Gibbon was out at sea with Scotland's progress towards an urban and industrial civilization; we it shows.

*The Speak of the Mearns* marks a return to the setting of *Sunset Song*. Only eighty pages were written and some of them were left in uncompleted confusion. But there is evidence that Gibbon at his best: evidence of his ability to evoke what it was like to be upon the land and to be involved in the semi-autobiographical character of Keith Strathairn. Gibbon's own sense of being away from that life and evidence finally of that feeling for Scotland's landscape which results in the acoustically harrowing and tantalizing of several thousand years' landscape and community in a twentieth-century form. But it is a unsatisfactory and tantalizing as such fragment must be. Ian Campbell, its editor, was right to publish it; to make clear exactly what was lost with Lewis Grassie Gibbon's death.

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256pp. Cape. £7.95.  
0 224 03096 X

*Pilgermann* is in part a historical novel set at the time of the First Crusade, during the years 1096-8, but stopping short of the actual fall of Jerusalem in 1099. It is also, as its title suggests, an allegory. Its eponymous hero and narrator is a figure of the Jew, as well as a pilgrim — a "pilgermann" in the general sense of sojourner or wanderer, and also in the specifically religious sense of a man on a long journey to a sacred place. Pilgermann was born in 1071, the year of the defeat of the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert (all dates in the novel are symbolic, often suggesting the sameness and continuity of history, its unending cycle of renewal and decay). Pilgermann lives in Germany, and works "as a tailor or a surgeon or something of the sort" for a tax collector, "an official of some kind, something of authority, a man of exactness". This man is also a type of the anti-semita, or more awkwardly (and this is not a singular awkwardness) "such a man as that cannot live without a Jew to be other than."

Since the novel is an allegory, and a complicated one, the details of its plot are worth recounting. One night — and not just any night, but the Eve of the Ninth of Av or Tisha b'Av, the High Holy Day on which Jews mourn not only the destruction of the First and Second Temples, but other disasters as well — Pilgermann climbs a ladder up to the tax collector's beautiful wife and makes love to her. The wife's name is Sophia: Wisdom. As the narrator puts it: "There's allegory for you, the vision of naked Wisdom and the Jew lusting after her." The consequences of this coupling are disastrous — and thus recall the date. On his way home from the tax collector's house in Keinjundstrasse, a mob of Christian peasants "following a sow who wears a scarlet cross" attack and castrate Pilgermann, feeding the sow his genitals. The castration, Pilgermann later tells us, is a symbolic reminder of the mortality that castrates everyone.

At this point the cuckolded tax collector appears, saves Pilgermann's life, and before doing so fatals the head of the mob (which he seems to have summoned) asks him to "Pray for me"

— or it might have been "Kick me". Pilgermann can't tell. This confusion has metaphysical or mystical implications that are quickly taken up in an ensuing moment of revelation: Pilgermann the Jew calls on God, and sees Christ; a vision which occasions several pages on the dual moral nature not only of divinity but of all creation — a line of paradoxical speculation familiar to readers of *Riddley Walker*. It also contributes to Pilgermann's decision to follow his Bath Kol (or voice of God) and join the newly contrite tax collector on Pope Urban II's Crusade to Jerusalem.

Pilgermann never gets as far as Jerusalem, stopping for the last half of the novel in Antioch, at the siege of which he dies. His adventures along the way involve further allegorical encounters, some recalling Bunyao, others borrowed from Bosch, including animated vignettes from the "Haywagon" and "Temptation of St Anthony" triptychs (later there's n

seven page meditation on the stone Christ-story of Naumburg Cathedral, as well as briefer discussions of Vermeer and Gislebertus). Among the characters Pilgermann encounters on his journey are the tax collector again — though by now he's been decapitated and maggots flow from his neck; the man who killed him, a relic-hunter named Udo, who hopes to pass the collector's head off as Pilate's; Udo's wife (another Sophia), with whom the eunuch Pilgermann has sex of a kind; a bear whose owner thinks is God, and shoots full of arrows when it threatens to desert him; Death, in skeleton form, who copulates with a variety of men and children (note the conflation of mortality and procreation); and the unformed image of Pilgermann's own death, later to reappear at the end of the novel as a death fully formed or born — another symbolic paradox.

Each of these encounters is the occasion of much philosophizing, as is the journey itself: "the treadmill on which we walk day into night and night into day, cden into gchinnon into cden, Jesus into Judas into Jesus."

The journey ends in Antioch, "that city which with life, with sound and motion and colour . . . With in one form or another comes between the pilgrim and Jerusalem." Here Pilgermann is set to work designing a tile pattern for a wealthy silk merchant named Bembel Rudzuk. Rudzuk is a devout Muslim, and as prolix a mystic as Pilgermann. His hope is that Pilgermann's pattern — reproduced several times in the novel, as well as on the cover — will reveal something of the nature of the universe. It does, in the form of a by now familiar series of mystical paradoxes about movement and stillness, unity in multiplicity, inward and outward, renewal and decay. Its names are "Hiddeon Lion" (the lion is also an important symbol in Hoban's first novel for adults) and "Willing Virgin" (because "the next time you look there's something different about it" — which is also meant to be true of the novel). "The lion is bidden in the willing virgin"; that is, among other things, virgin and lion are ultimately the same, like victim and victimizer, torch and flame, Christ Pandamonium and Christ Ali-Subdurer.

With the siege of Antioch the novel's historical dimension comes to the fore, and at last Hoban offers the reader an element of drama or narrative tension. Though the relentless allegorizing continues, the concluding pages have a powerful apocalyptic urgency. A saw character is introduced: Bohemond, the victorious Frankish leader, though he too is quickly barked about with

symbolic associations (principally those of Elijah, making Antioch the "Messiah and Jerusalem loth"). Other historical figures who appear or are mentioned include Firoz, the treacherous keeper of the city's Western Tower (he "opens the door" for Elijah/Bohemond, as in the Seder); Yaghi-Sijsn, the city's Governor; and Raymond of St Gilles, Count of Toulouse. Pilgermann's own fate is intertwined with these historical figures, and his death comes, in a shower of symbols, at the hands of Bohemond. Just before his death, though, Pilgermann is granted a dream vision of the sack of Jerusalem in the following year. In this vision appear the dead and violated body of the first Sophia (she too had come on pilgrimage), and the still living son of their single coupling. The eunuch Pilgermann learns at the moment of his death that life goes on.

All this is related by Pilgermann from the present, through what for convenience one might call his spirit. "What I am now", Pilgermann tells us, "is waves and particles." "Particles", we later learn, are in "the allness of the everything of which each of us is a particle"; "waves" as in radio waves or vibrations, so that Pilgermann speaks of being "tuned to the gchinnon frequency where I vibrate to the memories of all who have done evil". Later, in full mystical flow, Pilgermann speaks of himself as a "poor bare tuned fork, humming with the foreverness of the Word that is always Now. Unbearing the Unbearable, intolerating the Intolerable, being not enough for the Too-Muchness." In *Who's Who*, Russell Hoban lists his recreations as short wave listening and stones; short wave, presumably, for its "cosmic" as well as quotidian resonance, as in passages like these; stones because they so literally incarnate the paradox of inert matter and ceaseless atomic activity (all those whirling particles). Stones, moreover, are prominent symbols in Hoban's fiction, especially here and in *Riddley Walker*.

In *Riddley Walker*, however, Hoban's mystical tendencies were anchored by a justly admired invented language. The language gave body and solidity to the culture and history of the people it depicted; it was a way of ballasting and testing the author's metaphysics. *Pilgermann* has no such weight or measure. Its interest lies almost exclusively in the fanatically complex correspondences through which "Truth" emerges. Its language, the voice Hoban has found for Pilgermann, is at best unobtrusive, a not always easy mélange of Biblical and contemporary rhythms and diction. Its story is merely a vehicle for the symbols (but then, as Pilgermann puts it: "I can't tell this as a story, because it isn't a story; a story is what remains when you leave out most of the action"). Pilgermann himself, like the novel's other characters, is abstract and unengaging, despite his jaunty manner ("Pilgermann here", the novel opens), and the almost inevitable sympathy extended to a first-person narrator. His anxieties and uncertainties are viewed *ab extra*, as parts or pieces of a larger pattern.

It is the pattern that counts. In the Acknowledgements page (this is a fiction with forty or so footnotes and a concluding remark on sources) Hoban explains *Pilgermann's* origins: "*Riddley Walker* left me in a place where there was further action pending, and this further action was waiting for the element that would precipitate it into the time and place of its own story. That time and place were chosen, I believe, not out of any feeling for an actual historical setting, but because they allowed Hoban to quarry Jewish, Christian, and Islamic cultures (one thinks of the novel's three epigraphs, one from the Old Testament, one from the New, and one from the Quran); and the structure of allusive parallels and symmetries that results is impressive. But it also drains energy and interest from other aspects of the novel. Though artful and committed — the work of a true believer — *Pilgermann* is also bloodless and disembodied, for all its talk of the shock of Thing-in-itself, the enormity of Now."

In *Riddley Walker*, however, Hoban's mystical tendencies were

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# Moulding the details

Raymond Carr

SYBIL and DAVID ECCLES

By Safe Hand: Letters 1939-42  
432pp. Bodley Head. £16.  
0 370 30482 9

It is a mystery why people reveal their private lives in public except for money. Money cannot be David Eccles' motive in publishing the correspondence between himself and Lady Eccles from 1939 to 1942. It must be his desire to pay tribute to the memory of a much-loved wife (whose letters stand in their own right as movingly written accounts of the minutiae of daily life in England during the Second World War) and to carve out his own niche in history.

To support his view that his own actions helped to determine the course of history, Lord Eccles elaborates a theory which in the working philosophy of most politicians who have thought about their métier. There is, he argues, "a swing, a rhythm, a pattern in history... The problem is to judge how far you can go without offending the details to your own liking." As a young, handsome man, eloquent on paper and in speech, Eccles considers himself to have been an expert moulder. The moulding process in negotiation he likens to sexual seduction. Success comes from seizing the moment, an enlightened opportunism constantly threatened by unimaginative Whitehall bureaucrats with "their lack of faith in everything human and divine". They are, his wife writes, "like flies shut up in a luxurious bottle". Etionians are no good at the game. The Etionian mind does not embrace the "idealistic, the pathetic and illogical side of the human spirit". The "cool, lucid yet ardent mind" is the property of Eccles's fellow Wykelamians, Roger Makins (Winchester and Christ Church) has it - he is a steady supporter of Eccles in the Foreign Office; Hugh Dalton (Eton and King's College) singularly lacks it since, sitting in Whitehall, he does not see the rationale of the imaginative policies that Eccles is pursuing abroad.

Lord Eccles illustrates his capacity to "mould the details" in letters written to his wife while *en poste* in Lisbon, Madrid and Washington. As a director of a Spanish railway company he had been recruited early in 1939 by the Ministry of Economic Warfare to handle the Iberian Peninsula. Over Spain he differed sharply from his

masters in London: Dalton, then Minister of Economic Warfare, inherited all the prejudices of the left against Franco. The blockade which Britain could enforce must be used to punish Nationalist Spain for its pro-Axis sympathies; any supplies allowed into a starving country would only end up in Germany. To Eccles, however, the blockade must be used as a flexible instrument to keep Spain out of the war - an aim which he rightly saw as of paramount military importance - by providing Spanish neutrality by providing the supplies without which the Spanish economy would collapse. To allow Spain to starve would be to play into the hands of the Germans, very much in evidence in Madrid society and ready to make the most of Britain as the historic enemy of Spain.

What part did Eccles's flexible policy, and the issue of neutrals that allowed Spain to import these needed supplies, have in keeping Spain out of the war? This is a difficult question. Britain-enforced starvation would have undoubtedly increased German leverage in Madrid and left Franco with no incentive to avoid an open breach with the Allies. The danger point was immediately after the fall of France, with German troops on the Pyrenees. If the Republic had won the Civil War an exhausted country could not have kept Germany from invading a "corrupt" democracy; but Franco was an enthusiastically convinced that the Germans and the New Order were on the brink of total victory in a short war. Invasion would have had to be by consent and Hitler did not press Spain to join his war in the summer of 1940. When he did, at his meeting with Franco at Hendaye in October 1940, Franco still believed in an Axis triumph but the prospect of a short war was less certain. To commit his nation, spiritually and materially exhausted, Eccles amply demonstrated, he demanded the fulfilment of a great Spanish objective: the immediate promise of a large slice of French North Africa. Since Hitler was meeting Pétain next day, this he could not grant. After that the prospect of Spain declaring war on the Allies steadily diminished.

What Eccles, as the MEW representative in Spain, and Sir Samuel Hoare, as Ambassador in Madrid, did was to reinforce Franco's hesitations and instinctive reluctance to engage in any war that in Hoare's words "entailed heavy fighting", at Berchtesgaden, Serrano Suñer, Franco's brother-in-law and Foreign Minister, reminded Hitler to his face that to desert non-belligerence for war

would mean the end of neutrals and the immediate loss of 300,000 tons of US wheat.

Lord Eccles is, I think, unfair to both Hoare and Serrano Suñer. Hoare, according to Eccles, was subject to panic, "a miserable creature", "a pink rat" ready to throw in the towel; yet, though his apologetic *Ambassador on Special Mission* overstates his influence, he too, like Eccles, saw that "to treat Spain as an enemy is playing into the hands of the Germans". Eccles admired Hoare's sheer competence and he himself sometimes despaired of buying neutrality with wheat and petrol. Serrano Suñer was Hoare's *bête noire*, whom the Ambassador regarded as totally devoted to bringing Spain into the war on the side of the Axis, and to Eccles he was a "disgusting little man". Like Hoare, Serrano Suñer has written his apologetic. He never conceals that he believed in the Axis and that Spain should take its place in the New Order, but he also maintains that he shared Franco's conviction that nothing but the great reward of a Spanish Empire in North Africa would justify bringing Spain into the war in September 1940. The only way to avoid German pressure for an immediate declaration and to stave off a German invasion was to profess undying loyalty to Germany (hence the flood of pro-Axis propaganda in Spain that so irritated Hoare and Eccles) while putting up every conceivable excuse for delay in taking any step towards joining the Axis. While Hoare and Eccles see Serrano as the main protagonist of joining the winning side, this was not a view shared by Hitler, who saw him as a "Jesuit". While Serrano Suñer could be appealingly rude, he could, like Eccles, seduce by charm; he saw no point in charming the British.

Eccles sees the success of Spanish policy pursued by Hoare and himself, backed by Makins in Whitehall, as a triumph over Labour politicians who insisted that Spain was wicked rather than weak - and being weak a subject for the "moulding" that was successful in "keeping the Germans out of the peninsula". His ambitious attempt to use the same carrot that had worked in Spain - British and American essential supplies to a besieged economy - failed to bring Weygand and French North Africa over to the Allies. He liked Pétain, whose simple political morality had been revealed to him in privileged conversations with the Marshal in Madrid, and believed that support for Gaule was a mistake. "Shall we try to get the French Empire back into the fight line through Vichy or through de Gaulle?" He thought through

Vichy. He did not there succeed in "moulding the details of history" to his own liking.

The best literary portrait of a man, Cardinal Newman maintained, is to be found in his letters. Eccles must expect that his reviewers will brood on his personality, so nakedly displayed in letters to his wife not intended for publication. Both parties share a conviction that, in the long run, politics is a branch of Christian morality even if, in the short run, political success depends on being in the right place at the right time; both reflect an upper-middle-class despair at the shortcomings of a society burdened with aristocratic hangovers, at its lack of vision. No one is thinking of the shape of Europe and the world after the war, a matter which obsesses the "Berian wizard" Dr Salazar, the austere Christian dictator of Portugal with "his

sense of the world as a whole" shows Lord Eccles again in his conversations.

"I shall soon be ready to pay through the breach that is widening in the old hierarchy," Eccles writes in May 1940. In 1943 he became an MP and I remember his being spokeo of as the next prime minister but two. Yet he never reached the top of the greasy pole. Was he too ambitious, too pushing - "Lucky to regain" - or was he too civilized, superior person? "By fit and chance an ambitious," he confesses. At times he seeks guidance in the Duke of Wellington's dispatches; at others quotes T. E. Lawrence's cry, "This is God's freedom to mankind". Lord Eccles's letters are, not only a contribution to history; they illuminate the psychology of politics.

## Looking to the South

Peter Beck

VIVIAN FUCHS

*Of Ice and Men: The story of the British Antarctic Survey 1943-73*  
384pp. Oswestry: Anthony Nelson.  
£13.95  
0 90461 06 9

M. J. ROSS

*Ross in the Antarctic*  
276pp. Caddam, 9 John St, Whitby, Yorkshire. £12.50.  
0 90355 27 X

*SUE LIMB and PATRICK CORDINGLEY*  
*Captain Oates: Soldier and Explorer*  
188pp. Batsford. £12.50.  
0 7134 2693 4

"The Falklands factor" will no doubt lead to more and more books being published (or re-issued) on the British Antarctic Territory, concerned either with the political or the scientific aspects of that region, though these are really intertwined. In the most significant of the three titles under review, however, Sir Vivian Fuchs attempts to push aside "boring" political issues in order to stress the autonomy of science. In 1973, Fuchs argued that the Antarctic Treaty of 1959, being shelved sovereignty disputes, meant that Antarctica has become a continent for science. Let us hope that the scientists are allowed to continue their studies uninterrupted by outside influences. In an appendix to *Of Ice and Men* he develops this view, focusing upon both the intrinsic merit of knowledge and the relevance of scientific research in a continent of considerable economic potential.

Fuchs's basic aim in this book is to provide "a polar odyssey", the story of the permanent British expedition which has been at work in Antarctica since 1943-44. Initially as a wartime naval operation, "Operation Tabarin", subsequently as a civilian body, the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS), and currently as the British Antarctic Survey (BAS). As the Director of FIDS and BAS from 1959 to 1973, Fuchs was himself a principal actor in Britain's Antarctic story and was well qualified to write this interesting and profusely illustrated narrative.

He covers both the achievements and the failures of the best-aided Antarctic schemes, but his preference for a scientific perspective means that some of the key stages in the story - for example, the origins of "Tabarin" which are obscured by the fact that the relevant public records are still closed - are glossed over. Nevertheless, Fuchs is unable to hide the fact that British scientists working in Antarctica are indeed involved in the sovereignty questions arising out of Anglo-Argentine-Chilean rivalry in this part of the globe. The scientists have been planning to take place at all. It still goes on, then Doughty's book might have more than passing historical interest.

## POLITICS

JOHN MINNION and PHILIP BOLSOVER (Editors)

*The CND Story*  
158pp. Allison and Busby. £5.95.  
0 85031 486 0

ROBERT SCHEER

*With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War*  
286pp. Secker and Warburg. £8.95.  
0 436 44353 4

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was launched in February 1958, and began to create a national debate where there had been none before. The political establishment found itself under pressure from an unexpected direction, and for a while it seemed as if the character of British defence policy could be radically altered. In the event, the establishment had more staying power than CND, which soon found itself pushed into the periphery of politics.

Twenty-five years after its founding, CND is again riding high and the same questions as to its eventual political influence are being asked. Is it investing too much hope in the Labour Party? What is the role of civil disobedience? Should it shout or mumble about its opposition to NATO? How much should it get involved in related campaigns? How much is it dependent on the current state of international tension and vulnerable to the first revival of East-West détente?

As 1983 is generally considered to be a critical year - with both a general election, in which nuclear policy will be a major issue, and the arrival of the first cruise missiles expected - these questions are being asked with some urgency. The urgency is underlined by nagging doubts as to whether the movement can sustain its current effort much beyond 1983. Nigel Young observes in *The CND Story* that "there is a cyclical quality to all social movements, especially those heavily dependent on the young. There is a limit to the number of years that individuals will devote to a single cause, successful or unsuccessful; it will become institutionalised or they will turn to other things, jobs, families, homes and other issues."

## The soldier's role

Geoffrey Best

VOLKER R. BERGHAN

*Militarism: The History of an International Debate 1861-1979*  
132pp. Berg Publishers Limited, 24, Blinworth Avenue, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SQ. £8.95.  
0 907582 01 X

"I defend myself. You are aggressive. He is a militarist." One of the surprises awaiting readers of V. R. Berghan's modest but muscular book is the demonstration that most of us may be called militarist nowadays, by virtue of belonging to societies which social scientists can hardly call anything else. For over a hundred years they have been driven to use this word and concept "as a way of trying to come to terms with the problem which arises in the large and more complex communities, i.e. the problem of the role and position of the soldier within them."

Analyses made up to the time of the First World War fell, broadly, into three categories: "realistic", non-Marxist, believed that the military power to the State and the military dimension of society were here to stay, and didn't much mind it; more optimistic non-Marxists believed that such "military presence" marked immature societies in an immature international order and that with maturity it would pass peacefully away; and Marxist-Leninists believed it would pass away but not without the violent overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist political-economic orders it faithfully represented.

What happened in the world after

it is this sense that, twenty-five years on, the movement of which CND is now only one part is moving to its most critical test that gives *The CND Story* much of its interest. The book consists of a number of short reminiscences of CND's past and in-house debates on how it should conduct itself in the future. The book is not really for the uncommitted. The justice of the cause is assumed. Nevertheless the book is not without interest for the non-member, for it does provide real insight into the thinking behind the campaign. There is a very little else available on what it was up to in the last years of the 1960s and 70s.

However, it does not give the whole story. One looks hard for a discussion of the role of the Communist Party. There are chapters on the relationship of CND with the Labour Party, the Nationalist Parties, the SDP/Liberal Alliance, but not with the poor Communists who at least deserve some credit for keeping the campaign going during its most depressed period. Another issue that arrived too late for serious attention is the wisdom of allowing the campaign to let its fortunes get so tied to the antics of the ladies of Greenham Common.

The anti-nuclear movement has benefited up to now, however, from the activities of the Reagan administration, as is made clear in *The CND Story* from references to "warmongering speeches" and "first strike" plots. Because of this, Robert Scheer's book, *With Enough Shovels*, will probably be used as extra ammunition in persuading people that the connection with the United States is a cause of real danger. Scheer offers a disturbing tale of male nuclear war-fighters and zealot anti-communists at the White House and the Pentagon. His technique is simple. He allows his victims to talk into his tape-recorder and damn themselves with foolish utterances. His prime victim is one T. K. Jones, Deputy Under-Secretary of Defense for Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, whose prime quote, referring to the possibilities of digging deep trenches for do-it-yourself civil defence, provides the title for the book. "If there are enough shovels to go round", explained Mr. Jones, "everybody's going to make it."

In providing a context for the long

## Lawrence Freedman

quotations from his interviews, Scheer correctly points to the importance of the opposition to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks in propelling some rather hawkish personalities and ideas to the fore. In fact, the US nuclear debate of the 1970s was every bit as passionate as the European debate of the 1980s, although more confined to the élite (a bit like the British debate on the Common Market).

Groups such as the Committee on the Present Danger moved from their success in proving the ratification of SALT, helped by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, on to working to defeat President Carter. The Reagan administration provided them with a home and they set about asking for astonishing sums of money to "rebuild" US defences, exploring all manner of strange strategic options, imposing impossible conditions on arms control and adopting an unremittingly hostile stance towards the Soviet Union. Not surprisingly, all this went down badly with America's allies and became extremely unpopular in the United States itself.

Scheer conveys the flavour of the hawk's rhetoric and reasoning. His book will no doubt become a prime source of quotes designed to trouble sleep and stimulate recruitment to CND. Here we have authentic Reagan comments. Lawrence Berghan's *The Treaty Trap*: "It was the result of years of research and it makes plain that no nation that placed its faith in parchment or paper, while at the same time it gave up its protective hardware, ever lasted long enough to write many pages in history." Armed with his tape-recorder, Scheer went off to find the President's mentor, 82-year-old Mr. Beilenson, who immediately told him: "We ought to try to overthrow any Communist Government. I go all the way, I include Yugoslavia..."

The basic message, as stated on page one, is that "our leaders during the times of Ronald Reagan have come to plan for waging and winning a nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and... are obsessed with a strategy of confrontation including nuclear brinkmanship - which aims to force the Soviets to shrink their empire and fundamentally alter their society." The method is to pile outrageous quote

upon outrageous quote to support this overall impression. The result is rather unsatisfactory. The book is much more a collection of source materials than a fully-developed argument. Of 279 pages up to the index, less than half are made up of the actual narrative. There are eighty pages of transcripts of the most choice interviews (including a number with figures from the liberal establishment, who are used to highlight the reckless extremism of the hawks) and another eighty pages of detailed notes, including long extracts from newspaper stories.

Scheer tells us little of the actual fate of his cast of hawks and their dangerous notions over the past two years. Apart from Reagan himself, whose control over his own presidency seems somewhat tenuous, the only member of the cast to have exercised the malign influence anticipated by Scheer is Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy and popularly known in Washington as "The Prince of Darkness". Perle has been responsible for pushing concepts of "protracted nuclear war", a negative approach to arms control and the economic sanctions on the USSR.

Two points can be made about Perle's experience. The first is that it has brought him into conflict with other members of Scheer's cast who are supposed to be part of the same conspiracy. Eugene Rostow, an unreconstructed cold warrior and founder-member of the Committee on the Present Danger with Paul Nitze, was sacked at the start of 1983, complaining bitterly that his efforts on behalf of arms control had been undercut by the Pentagon and in particular by Perle. I heard Rostow talk not long before his eviction from the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and marvelled at the complete disjunction between his hard-line rhetoric and the reasonably sensible proposals with which he concluded. One explanation was that his job was uninteresting in the absence of arms control and so he had little choice but to promote it, and was encouraged in this by his surprisingly liberal and professional staff. For a similar way, Nitze as head of the US delegation to the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) talks found himself exploring with his Soviet opposite number corrompment agreements of a sort that he would

have denounced if out of government.

Meanwhile, Richard Burt is now Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and is playing a key role in starting to get arms control back on track. Burt was interviewed by Scheer and is quoted, out of a context to make him appear a dogmatic opponent of any negotiations. Burt's confirmation was opposed by Senate right-wingers because they recognised that, admittedly in relative terms, Burt is capable of exercising a moderate influence on US policy.

So Scheer's first mistake is to fail to recognize the diversity of views within the Reagan administration and the institutional and political pressures that can effect remarkable changes in attitudes on taking office. It is not that Rostow, Nitze and Burt are closet doves. Far from it. But there are elements of pragmatism there which distinguish them from the crude ideologues.

Scheer's second mistake is to fail to ask about the problems that the hawk might face in putting their ideas into practice. Despite initial successes, Perle's style has been cramped by the continuing failure of the Pentagon's leadership to control the US defence budget and the growing Congressional pressure for cuts, the force of the search for a cost-effective way to protect against the new M-X ICBM from surprise attacks, the climb-down over the Siberian pipe-line sanctions and the public clamour in Europe and now in the United States for a less alarming defence and foreign policy.

Scheer's pessimism may be justified. Certainly the Reagan Administration's policy shifts do not yet constitute a complete U-turn and supporters of CND will hardly be convinced that the US government can yet be declared "safe". But Scheer's account does not even prepare us for the changes that have taken place, for it is not rooted in an analysis of the actual dynamics of policy-making and looks a feel for the complexities, rivalries and ironies of Washington life. It is a curiosity of politics that hawks can get away with policies for which doves would be condemned. President Nixon began his 1972 election campaign signing the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) talks found himself exploring with his Soviet opposite number corrompment agreements of a sort that he would

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## Supplying the goods

Peter Nallor

MARTIN DOUGHTY

*Merchant Shipping and War: A Study in Defence Planning in Twentieth-Century Britain*  
218pp. Royal Historical Society.  
£15.75 (£9.91 to members of the Society) from Swift Printers, Sales Ltd, 17 Athlon Place, London, BC1M 5RE.  
0 901050 83 0

The title of this book calls to mind familiar images of brave voyages: of convoys huddled together against wolf-packs of attacking submarines, and of the wartime triumphs and sacrifices of the Merchant Navy. That was the drama on which so much public concern and attention was focused in both World Wars. But what Martin Doughty does in this well-produced monograph, is to bring into the spotlight the framework into which the sailing and loading of the ships had to fit. He explains how the events of the First World War clearly demonstrated that technological advances in the preceding period of peace had so changed the shape of war itself, and the structure of the shipping industry and its associated services, that peacetime methods of commercial organization had become totally inadequate for the maintenance of an adequate supply of

appropriate goods in wartime. It became necessary for the government to take over control of every aspect of the problem of imports: the ships, the ports, the communication networks around the ports and the commodities themselves. It was not merely a question of getting the ships safely across the seas: which ports could they should they, go to? How soon could they be turned round, and how soon could their cargoes be distributed? Where would they go to pick up their next load, and who would pay, if the ship, or its cargo, was lost?

The experience, and the questions, were to be repeated, after no more than twenty years, in the Second World War. And in the interval, serious and prolonged attempts were made to ensure that problems comparable to those experienced in 1914-18 should not recur. But in the event, some of them did, and the nub of Dr Doughty's concern is to show how and why it happened. His explanation, broadly stated in his preface, is that the plans produced in the interwar years represented, in some crucial respects, sets of compromises between the Whitehall desire to adopt efficient solutions involving a virtual takeover by the state of the control of imports and their transport, and the more general, and frequently implicit, view that it was not only impractical but undesirable to impose such close restraints on the free-market system. Such controls might preclude the

voluntary cooperation of the commercial interests involved, whose participation was essential to the efficient working of any system. He shows how, sometimes, the potential congestion in the ports and the loss of import tonnage through inefficient use of shipping was almost as high as actual losses by enemy action; how no realistic estimates of shipping or port-handling capacity were able to be made; and how the uncertain nature of any future conflict might even informed guesswork more difficult. What would be the effects of air-raids? Which ports would be open? How much cargo would the railways and the much more extensive road transport facilities be able to deal with? The knowledge was lacking and the statistical expertise halting.

By its nature the book deals with a succession of specific aspects of the subject, some of which, like marine insurance, have rituals and languages of their own, and a multiplicity of committees. Doughty steers confidently through these confused waters and is robust in his arguments and his conclusions. He thinks there was, overall, irresolution in the face of the experiences in 1914-18 which measures that would be necessary. It is difficult to disagree with him; but it is also impressive that such extensive planning took place at all. It still goes on, then Doughty's book might have more than passing historical interest.



# Libido ad libitum

John Ryle

P. G. WALSH (Editor)  
 Andrew Capellanus on Love  
 329pp. Duckworth. £28  
 (paperback, £12.50).  
 0 7156 1436 3

CELIA HADDON

The Limits of Sex  
 202pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.  
 0 7181 2079 5

STEPHEN HEATH

The Sexual Fix  
 191pp. Macmillan. £12.95  
 (paperback, £4.95).  
 0 333 32750 0

AVODAH K. OFFIT

Night Thoughts: Reflections of a Sex  
 Therapist  
 256pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.  
 £6.55.  
 0 297 78043 3

BRENDA MADDOX

The Marrying Kind: Homosexuality  
 and Marriage  
 208pp. Granada £7.95.  
 0 246 11189 5

In an interview in the current issue of *Salmagundi* (Fall 1982 - Winter 1983), a special number devoted to homosexuality, Michel Foucault draws an analogy between the new patterns of sexual practice in contemporary urban culture and the elaboration of rules for love in the courts of medieval France. (The most notable distinction, in his view, is that the energy and imagination that were formerly channelled into courtship are today devoted to intensifying not verbal play but the act of sex itself.) This analogy could be taken to suggest that sexual liberation is as phantasmagorical as courtly love, that the sexually liberated being is as rare - even fictitious - a creature as the adulterous troubadour. All the same, in medieval scholarship courtly love will not lie down, even though it has now been shown that the institution of marriage, far from being deprecated, became increasingly strong from the eleventh century onwards; that adultery was severely punished; and that the texts of courtly love - *The Romance of the Rose* or the influential treatise *De Amore* written in the twelfth century by Andreas Capellanus - were not intended or considered as instruction books but as stories or games that maintained an ironic distance from the everyday. In literary studies it is just this ambiguity in the relation of texts to life that keeps controversy alive. In history, as P. G. Walsh makes clear in the introduction to his exemplary edition of Andreas's *De Amore*, courtly love can now most credibly be seen as a literary device, but one which issued a serious challenge to the prevailing mores of sex and marriage as imposed by feudal law and Christian precept.

The myth of sexual liberation is as powerful and intractable a notion as that of courtly love, one that generates both strong moral partisanship and a vast corpus of stories that have become embodied in the *ars amatoria* of our time - the Kinsey report and its successors, the works of Gay Talese, Nancy Friday, Shere Hite and a dozen other chroniclers. The difference is that we are living this myth and, unlike courtly love, it appears to be prevailing.

Irony is not a strong feature of the taste of sexual liberation; both the story-telling and the moralizing come straight from the heart or from the loins. But there is a new variety of literature non-scholarly sex book which questions the authenticity of such accounts, if not their sincerity, and suggests that the new freedom of expression in sexual matters, freedom both to express desire and to act on it, has, paradoxically, straitjacketed our imaginations, sacrificed the inventiveness and subtlety of courtship on a procrustean bed of lust. The poverty of the descriptive language of sex, and the elaborate difficulty we have in writing or thinking about it (a term that is other than banal, are actually compounded by the removal of prohibitions. Such writing seeks

responses to the sexual revolution that avoid both outright condemnation and unconditional endorsement; nevertheless it cannot help but draw on the language and values of one or the other of these positions.

The first, a view extant at the time of the troubadours, is Bible-based, Pauline or Augustinian: sex has a single function, reproduction; heterosexual acts without the possibility of conception are therefore perversions, along with onanism and homosexuality. Even the rhythm method may not escape stricture: according to the harshest version of this position, Vatican roulette is as much anathema as artificial forms of contraception. There shall be no recreation without procreation. In this tradition, sexual desire tends to be seen as an affliction, a wound, a kind of fever.

According to the opposite view, sex is as safe as milk. No one gets hurt: all can take their chance at bliss. The sex doctors tell us that sexual pleasure is everyone's birthright - medical technology has made it free from complications and the maximum amount of gratification can be extracted from it by reading the right books. In fact it is our duty to ourselves and our partners to do so. The favoured metaphor is appetitive: *The Joy of Sex* succeeds *The Joy of Cooking* and is followed by *Gourmet Sex*; Alex Comfort becomes the Brillat-Savarin of the bedroom.

There is a third view that distances itself from the subject, arguing that sex is a phantom conjured up by a medical investigation of bodily desire which has mistakenly created a single entity out of a multiplicity of sensations. In this view sexual feelings are too labile to be grouped under a single reigning metaphor, whether it is food or fire or fever. As Foucault puts it, the various sexualities - those, for instance, that begin in infancy, those which become fixated on particular tastes or categories of object or person (the fetishism or, arguably, in sexual "inversion"), those which invest relationships like that of doctor and patient or hunter and prey as schools of prisons - are each generated in different ways by mysterious interactions of power and pleasure, regulated by society but internalized by individuals.

Foucault's view, in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, might be said to represent the contemporary equivalent of that of the clerks of courtly love - a critical but playful distance from the oppressive orthodoxies, both those of repression and those of liberation. In *The Limits of Sex*, Celia Haddon also attempts to find a middle way. The liberationist view, she argues, that of the sex doctors, has encouraged a preoccupation with pleasure that engenders more anxiety and remorse than it relieves. The promise of the sexual Utopians has been betrayed. Not milk and honey but poison is all too often the outcome of their recipe. Ms Haddon's reading of the works of Havelock Ellis, Kinsey and Masters and Johnson reveals a hidden agenda in which the phantom appetite is elevated to a pleasure principle. A form of knowledge that had as its original aim the revelation of diversity of human relations has established a mistaken but powerfully normative notion that erotomania is the natural condition of man.

Her case against the privileged position of sex in contemporary Western culture (perhaps one should be on the safe side and say bourgeois culture, or the culture of people who read books about sex) is reinforced by the complications that have arisen in the medical technology that was supposed to liberate women, in particular, from the reproductive aspects of sexual activity. The iatrogenic disorders resulting from the use of oral contraceptives and the current epidemics of venereal disease have together cast a pall over the picture of sex as a healthy and harmless idyll. (It can be argued that the true beneficiaries of the sexual revolution have been the viruses and bacteria that exploit the new vectors created by widespread promiscuity and unusual sexual practices.)

Not that the sex doctors set out to invent new practices, only to trace the existing paths of pleasure and lineaments of desire, thereby releasing intercourse into discourse. But it can be argued that by this investigation they have established one new pleasure - the pleasure of talking about sex - and that this pleasure, the pleasure of representation, magnified and spread, as rapidly as microbes technology, century communications technology, has created the present babble of sex, the sexzack that both lulls and confuses us.

The revulsion against the Panglossian philosophy of the sex doctors can lead back to metaphors characteristic of a repressive era - sex as disease, a kind of epileptic fit that seizes us every so often. Haddon is not a reactionary to this extent; in fact she is in favour of the freedoms associated with the cultural deambulation that is the subject of her book. But she thinks things have gone too far, that our expectations are caught up to misleading images of sex as good clean fun, a sport that has covertly become highly competitive. *The Limits of Sex* is a sensible tract for the times, addressed to those caught in the fray, but it does not perhaps get to the heart of the problem.

The heart of the problem is this: the notion of sexual liberation depends on an understanding of power as a system of laws and taboos, external constraints on an unadulterated source of pleasure which "liberation" will release. But powers and pleasures are related in a much more complex and intractable way: they are both immanent in and constitutive of desire.

We are implicated in society's power play; we cannot escape from it under the bedclothes.

Some of these complications are reflected in *The Sexual Fix*. The double metaphor of Stephen Heath's little reveals a pull to both the tubifical and Foucauldian views of the matter. Sex is an addiction, something it's hard to give up; it is also a trap, something to be got out of. Western capitalism is to blame, says Dr Heath. It has produced a commodity that does not really exist and perpetuated it by cunning imagery and ways of talking, turning sex into a kind of fetishism that distracts from real relations between individuals.

Heath, who teaches English at Cambridge, is, like Haddon, concerned with the individual who finds himself caught up in this state of affairs; he is concerned also to reach an explanation of it in terms of the historical evolution of society. He writes, he says, against "the terrorism of 'sexuality'". *The Sexual Fix* strives to offer simultaneously an account of current theories of human biology, a history of ideas in the field of sexology, from the nineteenth century on, and a number of exegeses of passages from sex manuals, novels and autobiographies. The idiom swoops from the demotic through the literary-critical to the francophone psychoanalytic. Heath writes as though clarity were a trap - the thinking in *The Sexual Fix* seems to be going on under thick blankets and like an anxious lover he uses too great a variety of techniques.

Both he and Haddon tend to assume the existence of a sexual monoculture where everyone is equally vulnerable to the persuasion of the reigning

orthodoxy. That some people have different problems is revealed in reflections of an American therapist, Avodah K. Offit. *Thoughts* is an affecting collection of essays on such subjects as incest, incest, incest and incest. Much of Dr Offit's thought diluted Freudianism; what he has to say about the eating disorder, clinical terms a confusion of sexual hunger and the oil of lust, has some bearing on the reality of this metaphor in the life of the sex doctors. One enters, she says with their "swallowing" may be remembered vividly their earliest, their most gratifying experiences. The whose grandfather fed her kisses in childhood seeks to know those murmurings days for the rest of life. Most diets fail, says Dr Offit, invisible opponent is love.

Offit's own marriage day spent at her mother's holiday in the Catskill Mountains, a whole vacation palace where the classical love in the afternoon with doors open to the breeze. Here she says that "sex was recreation. Only life did I realize that it might be complicated feelings." Well, she wishes to return to a childhood white hotel; Dr Offit, who lives in New York City, has stuck to that pleasure comes first. Patients to enjoy sex remain in the sexual revolution, he says. On the other hand, the of sex therapists is itself a sexual revolution: Offit acknowledges that there is a done with lust except that certain fatalistic narcissism is waiting room.

Another sexual trope is in *Night Thoughts*. The sexual gather, may not be just a Sexual relations cause the release natural opiates - the chemicals enkephalins and thus "sex, in addition to it does, may actually reduce promote euphoria in much the fashion as small doses of the like drugs". If sex is literally Heath can't blame capitalism commodity fetishism alone.

This will be a comfort to the spouses in *The Marriage* tough-minded and tough discussion of marriage and sexuality - both male and female. Brenda Maddox's book is, doctoxically, an affirmation of strength of an institution that embrace such unlikely. The privacy of marriage turn to be a shelter against both the orthodoxy and the new, the homosexual spouses may agonize, they can also find freedom onxoly in a marriage firmly based sexual incompability. It is a straight spouse - if there is one must adapt, but husbands who physical gratification with other (Harold Nicolson, for instance) love their wives far more deeply their sexual partners.

Few sexual experiences flow in the net of language and deprivation of sex talk now these experiences - swallowing everyone. This may be all right Do-It-Yourself books, by the sex doctors, (for the search for authorization, legitimization of desire, can lead to literary low points.) But there is a problem of access in talking sex at any other level. These represent a genre distinct from sex manual - they are manuals talking and thinking about sex. As they are not helpful. With help will help prepare for a time when won't have to think about it much.

"Genital Herpes" has gonorrhea as the most sexually transmitted disease" William H. Wickett, Jr., MD, introduction to his book, *Cause and Control* (224pp, £1.95, 0 7088 2379 3). The book is presented in the first half of the under such headings as "What is Herpes?" "How do I know I have it?" and the last chapters are to questions such as "What does doctor do?" and "What is the for treatment?"

## Crowning ceremony

David Nokes

ROBERT LATHAM and WILLIAM MATTHEWS (Editors)

The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A new and complete transcription  
 Volume 10, Companion. 626pp, plus tables and maps.  
 0 7135 1993 2.  
 Volume 11, Index. 344pp.  
 0 7135 1994 0.  
 Bell and Hyman. £19.50 each.

"February 16 1668... all the morning making a catalogue of my books, which did find me work, but with great pleasure, my chamber and my books being now set in very good order." Pepys was a man whose deep instinct for order in his library, as in his life, would have been suitably gratified by the meticulous scholarship of Robert Latham and his assistants in the newly completed edition of the *Diary*. Three hundred and fifty years from the day of Pepys's birth, the appearance of the *Index* and *Companion* volumes of his *Diary* are the crowning achievement of a work of monumental editorial diligence. Latham's skill in tackling the extraordinary variety of Pepys's interests and enthusiasms has been to provide order without constraints, and clarity without suppression. Pepys himself used a certain judicious censorship to maintain his reputation for regularity. Only a week before completing the catalogue of his library he burned his copy of the salacious book *L'Ecole des Filles* "that it might not be among my books to my shame".

Similarly, in September 1666, when facing the possibility of an awkward Parliamentary investigation of the accounts of the Navy Office, Pepys "new moulded" those accounts and erased his own name from one ill-judged contract. The *Diary* itself is written in a cryptic shorthand, while Pepys further concealed his sexual indiscretions by describing them in a curious macaronic tongue, a confection of Latin, French and Spanish. Yet, paradoxically, the essential quality of the *Diary* is the remarkable candour with which he admits to all such sleights and subtleties. The glory of the present edition is that it imposes no outside censorship upon Pepys's words. For the first time we have the man as he revealed himself to himself.

The choicer, profounder and politer method of using books, Swift reminds us, is "to get a thorough insight into the Index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like flashes by the tail". I am happy to report that this Index passes the Swift test effortlessly. The primary requirements of any index - that it should be accurate and comprehensive - are meticulously observed; but Latham has gone much further than that. He has provided a volume whose synoptic summaries and gargantuan lists offer a flavour of the whole work, an evocation of the man Pepys and a positive incentive to read on. Under the heading *ANIMALS* we encounter an alphabetical menagerie from baboons to wolves that would have done credit to Noah. The heading *CLERK (OF THE ACTS)*, subsection *Ferquilles*, introduces an Aladdin's cave of bribes and gifts: silver flagons and candlesticks; gowns and gloves full of coins; sides of beef and barrels of oysters; a diamond ring and a warming pan, among the many other inducements offered to Pepys, and usually accepted, in return for contracts. The entry for *FOOD* takes up a full seven columns, and with a television series of the *Diary* in preparation, Pepys's reputation stands higher than ever before. In August 1662 he remarked, "I find myself a very rising man." He never wrote a truer word.

The Bell and Hyman edition of Pepys's *Diary* has been reviewed in the *TLS* as the individual volumes have appeared, beginning with a leading article on November 20, 1970 (Volumes 1 to 3), and continuing on December 24, 1971 (Volumes 4 and 5), December 8, 1972 (Volumes 6 and 7), August 2, 1974 (Volume 8) and July 16, 1976 (Volume 9). This information also appears in the *TLS*'s own index for the years 1940 to 1980, which is to be published next month by Research Publications Ltd, Reading RG1 8HE, in three volumes (2994pp, £300, 0 903713 94 3).

BAQWELL, wife of William: her

good looks, 4/222; P plans to seduce, 4/222, 266; visits, 4/233-4; finds her virtuous, 4/234; and modest, 5/163; asks P for place for husband, 5/65-6, 163; P kisses, 5/287; she grows affectionate, 5/301-2; he caresses, 5/313; she visits him, 5/316, 339; her resistance collapses in a house, 5/322; amorous encounters with: at her house, 5/350-1; 6/40, 162, 189, 201, 253, 294; 7/166, 284; 8/39, 95; 9/221...

Judged by the standard set by this excellent index, the *Companion* volume is slightly disappointing. It is not clear whether it is intended merely as a *bona-bouche* to the whole series, or as an encyclopedia of the Restoration. The *Diary* touches the life of its period at so many points and offers such an embarrassment of riches that the scope for annotation is practically infinite. Thus the range of persons and topics included in the *Companion* cannot help but seem somewhat arbitrary. Latham explains that his guiding principle has been "the importance of the person in the context of the diary. A ship's carpenter, if he is not clear whether it is intended merely as a *bona-bouche* to the whole series, or as an encyclopedia of the Restoration. The *Diary* touches the life of its period at so many points and offers such an embarrassment of riches that the scope for annotation is practically infinite. 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## commentary

## Death on the dole

Ronald Hayman

Kuhle Wampe  
Academy Cinema

If we discount films of his plays, *Kuhle Wampe* is the only film in which the dialogue is written almost entirely by Brecht. Ernst Ottwalt is given a credit as co-writer, but in several plays of this period Brecht gives credit to collaborators. It is odd that the film, made between August 1931 and February 1932, should receive its first British public screening in 1983. It is being shown in a double bill with Jean-Luc Godard's *Vivre sa vie* (1963), which superficially seems the more Brechtian of the two: it is divided into titled sections; it is austere in lighting and composition; it resembles a documentary, containing a catechism about prostitution and dealing with the representative case of a girl forced into selling her body to pay her rent.

Brecht's film is less concerned to tilt against the conventions of the cinema (which were less ossified in 1931); it makes a statement which, unlike Godard's, has nothing to do with the faces or the personalities of the actors, while the narrative material is tightly determined by a desire to illustrate the social consequences of unemployment. Brecht and his director, Slatan Dudow, however, do not seem to be going out of their way to introduce scenes involving mass participation, though the background of one sequence is provided by a workers' sports festival in which 3,000 members of a proletarian sports organization participate, and in one of the songs 3,000 voices are heard on the soundtrack.

In the plays Brecht wrote in the 1930s, it was usually a woman who was converted from political passivity to angry activism - Johanna Dark in *St Joan of the Slaughterhouses*, Pelagea Vinsova in *The Mother*, Señora Carrar in *The Rifles of Señora Carrar*. In *Kuhle Wampe* the convert is a man, Fritz (Ernst Busch) the lover of Anni (Friedrich Thiele) whose brother has killed himself, unable to bear incessant humiliation in the fruitless hunt for work and in the oppressive family rows provoked by old-fashioned parents who are unable to adapt their values to the new situation, although the father is unemployed too. Evicted for being late with the rent, the family joins Fritz in *Kuhle Wampe*, which was

formerly a holiday settlement and is now inhabited mainly by the unemployed. When Anni becomes pregnant, Fritz agrees to marry her, but reluctantly. Several Brecht plays contain a wedding celebration which goes wrong, and the equivalent here is a cleverly screened sequence of inelegant eating and greedy drinking at an engagement party which is held in a tent, while the fiancé remains outside, sulkingly venting his resentment on the crates of beer he bumps about. Anni breaks off the engagement, but unemployment, community singing and latent communism combine to change Fritz's attitude.

Though the screenplay was divided into eight "acts", Brecht was not thinking in terms of theatrical dialogue. *Kuhle Wampe* is built up out of images, and many of the most telling points are made silently, as when the despondent boy takes off his wrist watch and carefully moves the potted plants before jumping out of the fourth-floor window. When Brecht uses theatrical ideas, such as choric commentary, they are well adapted to the medium, as when, after the body has been found, the camera moves from neighbour to neighbour.

It cannot be contended that *Kuhle Wampe* is intrinsically a particularly good or important film. It is too shallowly propagandistic and the interest in the central characters alternates between seeming deep and seeming perfunctory. The story is not strong enough to save the film from being unbalanced by the spectacular crowd scenes and the sequences of argument, such as a political discussion in the S-Bahn about the profiteering destruction of the Brazilian coffee harvest. A number of good points are bourgeois reactionaries who become hot under his stiff white collar, and about the more sympathetic proletarian characters who are travelling back from the sports festival, but the protracted argument gives the film a top-heavy ending, whereas in *Vivre sa vie* there are no lingers in the lengthy philosophical argument between Nana and Brice Perain. Godard, if he is misusing the medium, is misusing it knowingly and expertly, while Brecht had no chance to acquire filmic expertise. It was absurd that Hollywood wasted his talent when he was living here from 1941 to 1947; *Kuhle Wampe* proves this, as well as forcing us to look in a new way at filmic elements in his plays.

## Shakespeare wallahs

S. Schoenbaum

Shakespeare in the Commonwealth  
Centre for Commonwealth Literature and Research, Mysore

In *Shakespeare Turned East*, offered by the University Press of Mysore in 1976 as "A monument to hands and hearts across the seas", east and west met in both authorship and content. Written by Professor H. H. Anniah Gowda, Director of the Centre for Commonwealth Literature and Research at Mysore, together with Dr Henry W. Wells, Curator of the Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, it explored analogies between Shakespeare's late romances and the classic theatre of India: the Sanskrit plays of the school of Kallidasa. Wells has since died, but his collaborator continues to use the Shakespearean connection to bridge two cultures. In January in semi-tropical Mysore, with its palm trees, bullocks, coconuts, and University clientele, Professor Gowda brought together twenty-five or so of us for a seminar on "Shakespeare in the Commonwealth".

From near and far they came: from Sri Veekateswara University, Tirupathi and the Punjab University in Patiala; from Hyderabad, Dharmar, Calcutta, and Madras, even from the North-Eastern Hill College, Kohima. Professor Philip Brockbank,

the Director of the Shakespeare Institute at Birmingham, was the British delegate. It was, I understand, the most widely representative Shakespeare conference ever to be held in India.

Indian themes understandably loomed large. Professor Gowda broadened his comparative enquiries to include Shakespearean middle comedy with a talk on "Likeness and Difference between *Much Ado About Nothing* and Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*", with special reference to the estranged pair: Hero and Claudio, *Shakuntala* and Dushyanta. (Others thought that maybe, Hermione was a less distant kinwoman than Hero to *Shakuntala*.) Light on Shakespeare's last plays: Professor T. R. Rajasekhariah of Gulbarga discussed the Indian view of "Sanyas" - wholeness or harmony - in the dramatist's last phase.

The translator's task occupied academic author and journalist from Madras, Dr D. Anjaneyulu, offered a stimulating paper on the variety of translations and adaptations in Telugu. Mostly, he felt, these failed to measure up, and traditional Indian English cyclopedic ambivalence attitudes towards Shakespeare. Dr V. Sachinidanandan of Madurai Kanakali University examined in detail Tamil translations, giving special attention to local traditions - linguistic, religious, and cultural. "Good" Shakespearean scholars are not good translators.

## Unshared assumptions

Peter Kemp

Omnibus: Writers on the Right  
BBC1  
Voices: Is Jimmy Porter Dead?  
Channel 4

*Omnibus* recently set beside each other two writers liable to get beside themselves over the strong points of Fascist dictators. Henry Williamson, fan of the Führer, was the subject of a documentary that comprised the first half of the programme. Ezra Pound, the Duke's disciple, featured in a play that followed.

Of the two, the survey of Williamson was the more substantial. The basic facts of his life were efficiently sketched in, and the main stumbling-block to an appreciation of him - his unbudgeable belief that Hitler was "a good and misunderstood man" - was rapidly drawn out. Called in to comment on Williamson's tribute to "the great man across the Rhine, whose life symbol is a happy child", Frederic Raphael easily toppled it with just one instance from the camps: the repeated breaking of youngsters' bones to see how long it would take before they ceased to mend. Meanwhile, foregrounded in the hut where their hero used to write, Williamson *aficionados* paid tribute to his "compassion".

The programme tried to bridge these two positions by suggesting that Williamson - traumatized by his experiences on the Western Front - poured Hitler purely because he saw him as a man of peace. This image of the author as pacifist dreamer, though, was then punctured somewhat by the news that he kept a pitch-fork handy to fight off invaders of his Norfolk farm. And in any case, compassion hardly seems to be envisaged in his "Affirmation" of what "may of genius" should be: "artists in detachment" who "shut out the world as the sun which sees no shadows". A more promising approach might have been to follow the lead indicated by Ted Hughes in his address at the writer's Memorial Service. Williamson "worshiped energy". Hughes declared there - going on to make this insight link his art and politics more rivetingly than *Omnibus* managed to.

Ezra, a compressed version of Bernard Kope's play about Pound, left an even bigger gap between his right-

wing writer's politics and his conduct. In fact, it left out the latter altogether. Since the Ezra Pound Trust disavows the play, permission to quote Pound had been refused. Unbowed, it would appear, the transmission. Having lost most of Pound, it went on to lose most of Pound. At first, this deliberately engineered. Large over to Pound's ravings in his cage or American mental hospital. Ezra was a play that invested technical disruption to convey a message. Cacophony around the studio; a head was seen at three different angles at once; conflicting sound-tracks were simultaneously. Amid this visual gibberish, the play's plunge into silence seemed more a fancy effect. It was, supposed, as Pound mutely played his symbolic play. The message of the message "Temporary as sound" cut short such speculation. Not, alas, the play. Restored, Ezra relapsed into its loud but clear bulletins from Bedlam.

As if to even the political Voices, some nights later, that the Left, too, has its. Supposedly, the programme debate on David Edgar's claim that contemporary theatre should challenge its audience but "do not share assumptions". Given the boundaries of his central term, Edgar, *Guns and Dolls*, feminist political theatre, plays a dissemblance are all "celebrating" discussion seemed likely to rambling. In the event, intelligent prodding from Lisa (the debate was a non-starter). The largely due to the fact that two participants refused to be pried from *ideas fixes*. Secluded in a ideological purdah, Mollie Wandor, a feminist playwright, to her own premises, ignoring Gavin Richards, proponent of proletarian theatre, regularly any opening towards non-discussion by unloading class into it. Ironically, a debate about celebration of shared assumptions splintered dismally into the affairs of individual prejudices.

Denise Farson's *Henry: An Appreciation of Henry Williamson* reviewed in the TLS by Julian Savory on September 24, 1982.

## Landscapes in the light of day

Clovis Whitfield

Claude Lorrain  
Grand Palais, Paris

The largest retrospective ever devoted to Claude, at the Grand Palais until May 16, is also the first major exhibition of his work in Paris. Claude Gellée, called Le Lorrain, thought of more in his own time as a citizen of Rome than of France, was appreciated most, in the three centuries following his death, in England, where no country house collection was complete without an original or a copy. Although most of what has been written about Claude has not so far come from France, and this exhibition was organized in Washington to celebrate the tercentenary of the artist's death (1632), there are signs that the French public are waking up to the recognition of the greatness of his work. Curiously the presence of an outstanding group of paintings in the Grande Galerie of the Louvre has belied an indifference on the part of French collectors to this great master of landscape painting. It is only recently that his native town in Lorraine, Nancy, has acquired a work from his hand, and after the days when he and Poussin went sketching together in the Roman Campagna, Claude seemed out of step with the academic tradition, which accorded only a modest role to the landscapist. In a way, Claude could be seen as a kind of naïf painter, whose love of nature and whose individual interpretations of history subjects were not in line with the development of French painting in the eighteenth century, whereas they meant far more to the romantic sensibilities of the English traveller to Italy.

The conception of the exhibition grew from one of prints and drawings, to one including the pictures in America, and then finally to a comprehensive review of Claude's work, drawn from collections the world over. This means that the section of drawings is particularly strong, with marvellous sheets from the Royal Collection, the British Museum, the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, and from the now dispersed albums formerly in the collection of the Norton Simon Museum. The catalogue, drawn up by Daisie Russell, and essentially a translation of the Washington edition (480pp, New York: George Braziller, 0 8076 1055 0), makes its most important scholarly contribution in the area of the etchings, and although it is heavy on the arm, it is an excellent accompaniment to the exhibits and a sound introduction to Claude as a whole. With everything reproduced, many colour plates and a lot of comparative illustrations, it contrasts with the relatively modest presentation of the catalogue of the Arts Council exhibition of 1969 at the Hayward Gallery. There are a few variations from the Washington showing - the National Gallery sent the "Enchanted Castle" to America only, while the Queen has lent an additional work, the marvellous "Rape of Europa" that has been cleaned since it was shown in the Arts Council exhibition.

An important element at the Grand Palais is daylight, for in Washington the show was displayed in the exhibition galleries to the new East Wing, which are below ground level, particularly with landscape painting, it is important to have the benefit of changes of intensity of light, which are impossible when the source is wholly artificial. It would have been wonderful too, though impossible because of the lighting levels, if some of the drawings could have been set alongside the pictures, not just those that are prepared for studies, but also those which show Claude's observation of nature. It would certainly enhance the added impression that the artist sought, often at a distance of years and on a very concentrated scale, of those effects of nature that are the real subject of his paintings. The juxtaposition of pairs of paintings, where quite disparate themes are

united by the contrasting effects like morning and evening, is very effective in the Paris exhibition. So it is surprising that one of the most beautiful pairs of pictures that survive together, the "Arch of Constantine" and "Pastoral Landscape" in the collection of the Duke of Westminster, are not to be seen together in this season of celebration.

The cleaning that has been undertaken in recent years of many of the pictures (a process that is well documented in the catalogue) has

style did result in a larger scale, but he remained attached to effects of detail and atmosphere that link him to the cabinet tradition of Northern painting rather than to the design of the Italian pictorial school. There is reason to believe that Claude was moved by the sense of design to be found in the nascent Italian landscape tradition: the "Landscape with St George and the Dragon" from the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, directly echoes the composition of the painting of the same theme by Domenichino in the



"Landscape with Dance" (1662), pen, brown and grey wash, black chalk with white heightening; a drawing by Claude in his exhibition.

made it possible to look at Claude literally in a new light. Although the artist worked so intensively on some passages that certain of his effects have undoubtedly perished, others have come to be seen with the careful cleaning and restoration. Already in the eighteenth century the impression they gave had altered, and the imitations that date from the early eighteenth century painted by artists like Hendrik Van Lint often look more strident in colouring. It is excellent now to see the richness of modulation in the foliage and atmosphere of those paintings which are outstandingly well-preserved, like the "Ariadne and Bacchus on Naxos" (if that is really the subject) from the Arnot Museum at Elmira, New York. Unlike other contemporary artists in Rome Claude did not have assistants end the sympathetic cleaning of many of his paintings has revealed subtleties that have often been disguised since the eighteenth century.

The show clarifies the course of Claude's development; works like the pair of oval landscapes on copper from the Louvre which seem to have entered the Royal Collections in the time of Louis XV can be included as most probably pastiches, perhaps from the hand of Van Lint, who is described in an unpublished letter from Thomas Patch to Sir William Lowther in 1756 as having "always imitated Claude and has had the refouling of most of the fine ones in Rome". Patch himself did copies of the Claudes in Italy for English patrons, spending "five months' fatigues" copying the two in the Pamphili Palace. The English conception of ideal landscape was entirely coloured, in the eighteenth century, by this "Italian light on English walls".

It was not always the case that French collectors ignored Claude's work, and the record that he left of his paintings in the *Liber Veritatis* shows, in the inscriptions giving details of his patrons for individual pictures, that Paris was by far the most frequent destination for the early works, and the first twenty years of his Roman stay before the inception of this record. In this Claude was following the natural pattern of a foreigner working in Rome, coming into contact at first mainly with the Northern community, and like them producing works that were portable for the very good reason that they had to be carried to distant markets. The increasing popularity among Roman collectors of Claude's

late 1630s onwards. The splendid finished drawing, perhaps a presentation piece, of the "Rest on the Flight into Egypt", which was lost when Roehillsberger published his catalogue of Claude's drawings and turned up in the unlikely collection of the Musée du Petit Palais, is a convincing illustration of the admiration he shared with his patrons for Albani and the Caracci. In their turn, the French artists of the eighteenth century continued, from Vernet to Valenciennes, to use the principles of landscape composition that they culled from Claude, while intellectually their patrons regarded the genre of landscape as a decorative one. The exhibition enables us to see not only the extraordinary observation of nature that Claude achieved, but also the intellectual penetration of his understanding of classical themes, which was none the less imperfectly understood. It is still difficult to see the relationship between artists like Salvator Rosa, Castiglione, Poussin, Claude, Gaspard Dughet, Testin, Pietro da Cortona, Andrea da Lione, to mention but a few of the artists whose personalities emerged during this period. In this context, it is splendid to see the two large upright landscapes executed by Claude for the self-important project of decoration of Philip IV's Cason del Buen Retiro in Madrid, on which so many painters collaborated in the 1630s. But it is important to ensure that the most important masterpieces are now on display at the Grand Palais are to be subjected to the risks of travel, the audience for such an exhibition be as large as possible, and certainly this anthology will enthuse its public with an immediate appreciation of Claude's great qualities.

## Fifty years on: Montaigne

The following is an extract from an essay by J. Middleton Murry which appeared in the TLS of March 16, 1933 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the birth of Montaigne:

Montaigne is the standing confutation of all that is excessive and inhuman in Pascal. By his mere being he dissolves the menace of "le mal est toujours haïssable." Montaigne has something more to tell us than that, something wiser and therefore less distinctly formulable. It is that the self is lovable, if a man can bring himself to love it. What the self is depends upon how we behave towards it. It can be lovable, because it can be loved; but it can be loved only by the not-self. In his early manhood Montaigne knew the secret of love - self-oblivion came to him naturally in his friendship with Etienne de Boëtie. "Si on me presse de dire pourquoi j'ay moy, je sens que cela ne se peut exprimer qu'en respondant, 'Parce que c'estoit luy; parce que c'estoit moy.'" The quintessence of human love is those words. To have felt it is to have known that life is blessed: for love is the vision of the incomparable, the nonpareil; and it is seen only in self-forgetfulness.

To have turned his power of self-forgetfulness upon himself - this was Montaigne's triumph. He looked upon the self with the eyes of the not-self. And the history of that singular achievement is written at large in his book. - Indeed, the "Essays" are the embodied process of that achievement. Montaigne knew that also better than his posterity has known it. His book is one long and infinitely various act of self-discovery, self-objectification, by his own rules.

made possible only by "self-forgetfulness."

Montaigne touches his greatest heights in passages... where he surveys his own activity as the writer of the "Essays." At such moments the paradox of this achievement comes into full view; where he is ostensibly most personal, there he is most impersonal. Compare him, at such moments, with the later masters of self-revelation, with Rousseau of the "Confessions," with Chateaubriand of the "Mémoires d'Outre-tombe." It is not a difference of degree but of kind. In Rousseau and Chateaubriand we are interested; we read avidly all that they have to say; nevertheless, at the end, with Pascal at our elbow sternly demanding our final judgment, we are forced to confess that "le mal est toujours haïssable." But with Montaigne it is quite different. Where Rousseau and Chateaubriand blanch beneath the sentence of Port Royal, Montaigne stands secure and invulnerable. He is proof against all the audits of modern analysis; he had applied a radical moral scepticism, not to others but to himself.

Montaigne, who knows what life is doing, knows also the dangers of such knowledge. He must be faithful to his own growth. He must not prune, he must not trim, above all he must not suppress what he had written. It had come from him spontaneously; therefore it had its place in the pattern. The scruple did not prevent him from making his language more vivid and nervous. That would have been a fanfare. As an artist, and as a man, Montaigne knew when not to be bound by his own rules.

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## Oxford University Press







# Pollution and a sense of proportion

David Martin

MARY DOUGLAS and AARON WILDAVSKY

*Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers.*  
221pp. University of California Press.  
£11.25.  
0520 04916

Topollute, literally, to make muddy. Mary Douglas's lifelong concern has been with the problems caused by the existence, not of mud, but of dirtiness, and by the segregation of the world into what is pure and what is dangerously contaminated. The impure is the mixed, and she has been a pioneer in studying the kinds of mix which acquire a name for impurity. All our worlds, whether we speak of the Hima, the Old Order Amish or modern Americans, are shot through with barriers against the invasion of impurity. The invaders must be expelled. The inappropriate and abnormal reduced to propriety.

We, all of us, have our spartheld. Perhaps "the front room" is set aside for special occasions and houses the family icons; perhaps the virgin forest must be protected, perhaps some natural and therefore normal (or normal and therefore natural) balance has been disturbed. Anyway, we need a clean-up campaign; removing the improper dust from the table, or else repelling the malign invasions which threaten the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the society we live in. Worry enough about malign and threatening invasions of your body or the body politic or threats to the blessed virgin nature and it becomes clear that life is a killing disease. In the US worry about such matters, especially transgressions of "nature", has become endemic. Indeed, in this book it is argued that much of contemporary America teeters towards a chronic nervousness. What is happening represents a new and vastly expanded version of a "clean-up" campaign.

Initially there were groups with fairly localized fears about the contamination of their own environment, like the Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power. But they have been followed by groups with much more generalized cosmic anxieties who often espouse direct action and insist on their own internal democracy. They exhibit a decentralized structure, with an emphasis on participation, not unlike the American Anarchist Federation of Spain before the Civil War. It has been found that loose alliances can build up mass demonstrations without resorting to a centralized organization. There is often no chair for meetings and the "spoke" has to report back continuously to his comrades to ensure that he represents a consensus. Of course, this means that many hours are consumed in discussing procedural questions. "As among the Amish, each man in a priest; in San Francisco a People Against Nuclear Power, each is a leader."

The Cernishell Alliance recognizes no leader, which means in practice that the leaders resist identification, hiding in the crowd to retain their power. The Alliance focuses global issues through the symbolic lens of a fight with the centralized nuclear industry, run by corporate leaders. A perfect example of this is provided by Harvey Wasserman, one of the founders, who said that at the core of the nuclear issue is a confrontation between corporate, technological domination and decentralised community independence. The choice is closely linked to a broad spectrum of issues: to unemployment and high electric rates, to exploitation of Third World people and resources, to the plagues of nuclear armaments, environmental chaos, and our soaring cancer rates. The authors of this book profess to be people outside the field of controversy, many of whom worry about how they can transfer (for example) the anti-nuclear concern into a specific strategy which includes labour as a natural ally.

Thus far we are in familiar territory. The generation of the 1960s lives on in

these groups (or, if one were speaking of England, in Communal Arts). The next move in the argument is also familiar, and draws in an interesting way on elements in the viewpoint of the very people under scrutiny. Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky grant that there are real enough risks "out there". Nevertheless, the panic-stricken way people fasten on this or that site for concern, and discern the hidden hand of a global malignancy, is not a simple reflection of an objective assessment of risks. On the contrary, all the main modes of assessing risks reveal the social values of the assessors.

Agreed. Those who prefer taking risks will have a very different order of priorities from those who are averse to risk. They will disagree about what levels of safety are acceptable. But that is not all: the scientists cannot save us since they disagree among themselves about the evaluation of different kinds of risk and about how to assess a given danger. Douglas and Wildavsky cite the scornful debate about the contribution of environmental causes to the rates of cancer. At this juncture they go on to take two steps central to their argument. They point out, first, that it takes a team of scientists, 300 mice, two to three years, and about \$300,000 to determine whether a single suspect chemical causes cancer. Thus, "Potential but untested carcinogens must, on this account, overwhelm whatever is known about safety." Ignorance expands to match knowledge. The second step brings us back to the anthropological analysis of pollution. They cite an official of the Environmental Protection Agency who wrote that "The contamination of the environment is a fact of such overwhelming proportions that [it] must be dealt with on every possible front". This is no ordinary statement in their view. It amounts to a contagious fear of mass contagion, analogous to the fear of hostile agencies in primitive societies.

Analogies have a habit of being imperfect. Nevertheless, Mary Douglas here returns to a central theme of her work, which is the disconcerting similarity between our modes of thought and those of so-called primitives or for that matter those obtaining in the Middle Ages. Lévy-Bruhl held that everything that seems abnormal is explained by primitives as due to mysterious agencies called into existence by the mystic participations of the culture. Every disaster had to have a source, whereas for moderns the query about a death usually stops short at the death certificate. Lévy-Bruhl's astonishment would be great if he were to behold us now, modern using advanced technology, and asking those famous questions as if there were no such thing as natural death, no purely physical facts, no regular accident rates, no normal incidence of disease. "[Primitives] demand an autopsy for every death; the day that we do that, the essential difference between our mentality and theirs will be abolished."

I have almost reversed the order of exposition in the book but I hope I have not misrepresented the steps. Up to this point the authors pick their way quite carefully over awkward but familiar terrain, but then they begin to let slide an avalanche of implications: "the essential differences will be abolished". Yet when one looks up, after the avalanche, our authors are still carefully poised, retelling several other differences quite undisturbed. The conditions of "will be abolished" is useful since it leaves room for misapprehension. Moreover, Douglas and Wildavsky are not getting into the kind of anarchic relativism of the critics of "fact" and "modest operandi" found in Poyres and Not at all. Step back a page or two and it seems the avalanche was full of sound and fury, but relatively minor. We are only concerned with selection and priority among real dangers. What happened then?

I think our authors agree that the modern style for characterizing the connections, obtaining in the actual

world is distinctive. They certainly agree that "We can sweep aside all conceptions of nature that rest on control by spiritual beings, ghosts and goblins, spirits of trees or storms, ancestors, angels, even God...". What they really want to argue is that the politicization of nature in terms of identifying some untoward disturbance of the right order has a family resemblance to the way rotten in the state of the Hima or the Ik. Our sense of a broken order is similar to theirs, and so is the way that rival views about what is to count as a break or as "normal" run in harness with the solidarity of a given moral community. We, particularly if we are Americans, also nervously identify very broad agencies whose malignity lies behind proximate (and what are in principle discretely identifiable) causes of cancer in the body, pollution in the water, poison in the atmosphere. There is, then, a sort of companionship between (say) the Papal announcement that sixteenth-century Europe was threatened by a mysterious invasion force of succubi and what not, and the doubtful toll by those who pronounce today on the generalized sources of imminent doom.

The question of shared perceptions as to where malignancy is ultimately located, and of the relation these perceptions have with the solidarity of a moral community, allows the analysis to shift to the way sectarian groups protect their own social borders, even as they pronounce an imminent doom on the outside world. The comparison here is not with Iberian anarchists but with the Old Order Amish or the Shakers. Douglas and Wildavsky offer a subtle analysis of different types of social-organization-cum-world-view to be found among sects, which cannot be gone into in a review.

What matters for Douglas and Wildavsky is that America has historically generated sectarian groups at the border or at the social margin which have constituted an implicit criticism (or else have mounted an explicit criticism) of the centre. So sectarianism is specified as one

precondition of the contemporary explosion of concern. The development of technology, both as threat and promise, is another. In consequence, our sense of what is normal, natural and acceptable is shifting. The modern job confronted with even a minor bolt huris accusations at generalized malignancies, and will hardly stop to hear the Almighty discourse on his ignorance of the total marvel of time and space. He develops an accusing style, which may be aimed at godless Communism without or the large corporation within.

Well, of course, there are links between the paranoid style of a Senator Joseph McCarthy and that found (say) in the supporters of Eugene McCarthy. But this means, does it not, that centre and social margin display the same style but towards different sources of fear. An analysis of the style in terms of the special preoccupations of the border, more specifically of the sect, and of the contrast between central hierarchy and peripheral voluntary association, won't do.

This is not to say that what social scientists like Stephen Cotgrove claim about the contrast between commercial cornucopians and the catastrophists in the "expressive", professions of communication and teaching is not relevant. The struggle is dramatically illustrated in contemporary America, triggered by Vietnam, Watergate, the social developments in the universities and the knowledge class etc. "Public interest groups" of a certain kind have burgeoned, assisted by computerized mailing-lists and opportunities for generating support. The border actually gets the centre to allocate funds for broader objectives. In 1974, some nineteen government agencies spent over \$6 billion on environmental purposes, which Douglas and Wildavsky characterize as "the apotheosis of sectarian dreams". All this is plausible, even true, and the authors of this book have provided a fascinating and intricate analysis of it. The final pages are devoted to a

discourse on political philosophy concerning the dialectic balance between hierarchy, individualism and the sectarian border. Even this seems a bit debatable, since to one point in global accusation and at another to single-issue special interest groups. Nevertheless, it is true, I think, that the worst outlook for sectarian principles follows when, facing the declining tax base of an economy with no growth, government tries to rationalise its activities... Deference becomes less tolerable... [Sectarian leaders] are tempted to become part of the despised system, joining the hierarchies, and admitting evidence, and accepting judgements according to accepted centre procedures.

This may mean silencing the left sectarian support, and—supremely—increasing the bureaucratic apparatus needed to enforce the rules within outlaw pollution.

I have simplified a very complex argument presented by Douglas and Wildavsky, and moreover one which reads even more widely than I have indicated. There is a great deal to be mined in this book. But I do not think it is internally altogether consistent. It has queries about their own epistemological revolution which shows that our more usual epistemological revolution is not what we thought it was. A shift from "Culture" is surely vast, about equivalent to the shift from René Wagner. This reviewer is not going to complain when the preface to a "modern man" or modern society is punctured and deflated or to deny the nemesis awaiting a confident scientist which tries to subsume all problems under "line and rule". I still suspect, however, that analogies between panics over pollution and "primitive" inboos have been pushed too far, at least at the level of rhetorical tactics. As I suggested above, the caveats which Douglas and Wildavsky have quietly entered are enough to undermine a substantial part of the rhetoric.

Like most easy talkers, however, Jeffrey occasionally turned willed, and the tendency inevitably spilled on to the page. For example, here he is praising Shakespeare:

PETER F. MORGAN (Editor)

*Jeffrey's Criticism*  
181pp. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. £8.25.  
0 7073 0300 1

Shortly after the publication of his *Odes and Epistles* in 1806, Thomas Moore picked up the latest *Edinburgh Review* and was appalled to read its criticism of his book. Rather than post a carefree letter to the editor, Moore challenged him to a duel, and Francis Jeffrey, who was also the author of the article, accepted. The conflict was prevented by policemen, however, and the group taken down to the station. There, Jeffrey impressed Moore while lying flat on a bench and expatiating in his "oddy pronounced diction" on some literary matter, in "an ever rich and ready wardrobe of phraseology."

Other contemporaries also marvelled at Jeffrey's powers of conversation; he was famous in his lifetime as much for how he talked as for how he wrote. Of the literary celebrities of his day in Edinburgh, he was the one "whom travellers are most in a hurry to see", as J. G. Lockhart mentioned in *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*. Fortunately for them, but perhaps less so for posterity, he was also the most cordial of men. "The true reviewing diet is Champsagne mousu and devilled biscuit," noted Lockhart. In addition to being the leading contributor to his own *Edinburgh Review*, Jeffrey was also a successful Whig advocate (later Lord Advocate) and a determined socialite, who kept a keen eye on his role in smart society as on his place in literature. Indeed, the latter came about almost by accident, since the *Edinburgh Review* was brought into existence as a more diversion: "the main object of every one of us, I understand to be, our own amusement and improvement," he wrote in 1803.

Like most easy talkers, however, Jeffrey occasionally turned willed, and the tendency inevitably spilled on to the page. For example, here he is praising Shakespeare:

Although his sails are purple and perfumed, and his prow of beaten gold, they waft him on his voyage, not less, but more rapidly and directly than if they had been composed of baser materials. All his excellencies, like those of Nature herself, are thrown out together; and, instead of interfering with, support and recommend each other. His flowers are not tied up in garlands, nor his fruits crushed into baskets—but spring living from the

## Men will be boys

Anne Smith

*Records of The Most Ancient and Pleasant Order of the Beggars of Benison and Merryland, Anstruther*  
91pp. Edinburgh: Paul Harris. £3.95.  
0 86228 046 X

*The Beggar's Benison* is the latest slim volume in Paul Harris's series of reprints, "Gems of British Social History". (Earlier reprints have included the *Directory of Ladies of Pleasure in Edinburgh* and *The Secret Cabinet of Robert Burns*.) The *Beggar's Benison* was an eighteenth-century club of worthies from the East Neuk of Fife, who met in Drec Castle, Anstruther, twice a year to measure their peccates and masturbate in congenial company. Dirty jokes were told, dirty songs were sung, and toasts were made, while some well-padded village ladies "pelted" for the purpose. Some of his peccators in Benison, for example, would gaze at the retired worker who felt that "any couple that worked hard all their lives... they were entitled to a bottle of whisky or a barrel of brandy"—but there is reason in the argument for more militant peccators, campaigning by the elderly themselves. Which means all the elderly. Until the more fortunate work with the less fortunate. Instead of, with the best of intentions, working in the best of the chances of old people, they are much younger now, meet at random, and never call themselves a club.

It is the social anthropologist, perhaps, rather than the historian who would find most to interest him here, for the club Records present the Scots as a race whose sexual development was arrested at puberty. Yet there is some material for the historian. For example, it seems that George IV, when Prince Regent, not only joined the *Edinburgh branch*, but presented it with a silver snuffbox filled with the public hair of his mistress. The society was "composed of the Nobility and Gentry of Anstruther and adjacent districts in the Kingdom of Fife, and Caithness". Its members included "Bishop David Low of Pittenweem, along with his clum, the Earl of Kelly". Bishop Low apparently repented in time, however, for he "requested the last Recorder to delete his name from the existing Records, which was done fifty times". The Recorder unfortunately overlooked one feeble schoolboy joke, attributed here to the Bishop.

Only fragments of the original records remain, but these are enough to suggest the nature and tone of the meetings:

1733. *St. Andrew's Day*. 24 present. The tendering of Tosses; The menstruation of Skate; and The gender of an Earthworm. Arcana Shewn. Chambers shut in the usual form by our Sovereign.

1734. *Candlemas*. 13. Knights present. Chamber tyed at 3 o'clock.

soil, in all the dew and freshness of youth...

And so on and so on. The generous amounts of space which nineteenth-century editors could afford to grant their contributors were often at the root of this kind of verbiage, or else behind forty pages of "The History and Development of..." (what ever subject) before the first mention of the book allegedly under review. In a neat and otherwise informative introduction to *Jeffrey's Criticism*, Peter Morgan tells us little of Jeffrey's writing methods, but they must have been shaped, above all, by haste. For the first issue of the *Edinburgh Review* wrote six articles, which occupied seventy-five pages, and in the first few years of publication reviewed books on, among other subjects, architecture, philosophy, theology, law, geology, politics of every hue, not to mention the poetry, fiction, drama and aesthetics which form the basis of this new selection, the first since 1910. Far from being the work of a man of leisure, as is sometimes assumed, Jeffrey's essays have the stamp of productions from a fluent pen dashing to meet a deadline. A good editor would have cut most of them by half. On the whole, Professor Morgan has made a good job of editing the editor, although he could do nothing about the triplicates and repetitions which I frequently smother Jeffrey's meaning. I wish only that he had made the extent of his cuts plainer and also—since the value of this book is historical rather than simply literary—that he had provided fuller footnotes.

The mainspring of Jeffrey's criticism is his view of the relationship between literature and society. Generally, he believed that the writer's primary duty

was to the public, and that what could not be said or done in full view of the public—anything which offended against his narrow idea of decency—should not be allowed to pass on to the page. It is obvious to contemporary readers who have had experience of Dostoevsky, Kafka and Camus that this view of literature and society (and therefore of the individual and society) is unimaginative, and yet Jeffrey cannot really be excused by the age he lived in. His most serious weakness as a critic resides in his unwillingness to acknowledge with full heart other powers in literature than those of social cultivation and personal refinement.

And also his trepidation in the face of what he called "dangerous and turbulent emotions" in both public and private domains. The length to which Jeffrey drove this literary and emotional conservatism was itself, paradoxically, a personal eccentricity.

In his writing he is disconcertingly even untrustworthy, self-assured, and, equally, dull. A vocabulary as lively as intelligence, could hardly fill a turn on the occasions! screeching phrase or original metaphor, and there are numerous dashes of insight, but in general his style is unexciting. He is less concerned with how a particular word might sid his understanding of his place among men, than among gentlemen. This was the public mask he insisted on wearing; in the preface to his four-volume *Contributions* (1844), he modestly claimed his chief merit to be the ability "to impress my readers with a sense, both of the close connection between sound intellectual attainments and the higher elements of Duty and Enjoyment; and of the just and ultimate subordination of the former to the latter."

*The Highland Dance*, from Scottish Fiddlers and their Music by Mary Anne Alburger (256pp. Gollancz. £15. 0 375 03174 3).

Yet, not surprisingly, these

opened in due manner. One Feminine Gender, 17, was hired for One Sovereign, fat and well-developed. She stripped in the Closet, nude; and was allowed to come in with face half-covered. None was permitted to speak or to touch her. She spread wide upon a rug, first before and then behind; every Knight passed in turn and surveyed the Secrets of Nature. Afterwards the Sovereign Closed the Chambers, after Rapast in the accustomed form. Secrecy enjoined upon faith.

1734 *St. Andrew's Day*. 24 present and 4 women tasted and fringed. Betty Wilson, 15, was hired, but a bad model and unpleasant. Resolved against such another row.

Two essays read to the club are also reproduced here: "The Male Organs of Generation" (1813) gives a detailed anatomical description of the penis and testicles, with the occasional observation from experience, as "The male organ differs much in size, especially in men of small stature and foibles", and defends the practice of masturbation. "The Act of Generation" is a long-winded and possibly mildly erotic argument in favour of *colusa interruptus*, as preferable above all other means of birth-control. There are a handful of excruciating poems in this

Gentle zephyr from the skies

## In defence of decency

James Campbell

His reviews bear this out. They are full of phrases like "the first trait of refinement in manners", "a certain naïveté", "the fame of the poet is popular or nothing"; and his favourite words—"noble", "decum", "taste", "decency"—pepper the pages of this book. The contrasting terms are neatly strung together in an attack on Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*: "absurd, puerile, incongruous, vulgar and affected"; it concluded, "one flagrant offence against every principle of taste", which we may suppose was most revolting of all to the Prince of Reviewers.

The kind of confusion this worship of taste could lead to is revealed in his 1809 essay on Burns who, he actually writes, "had evidently a very false and crude notion of what constituted strength in writing". Although generally approving of Burns, Jeffrey cannot help fussing over his "contempt for prudence, decency and irregularity", the "fervour that is sometimes indelicate", and the poet's "want of polish"—all the characteristics, in short, which most appeal to us today (and, needless to say, to a large part of Burns's readership then). It is a pity that Morgan has excised from the Burns essay the section which deals with the linguistic divisions in the Scottish mind. This subject is still very much alive in Scotland today—for some, painfully so—and Jeffrey's remarks are worth reading. He suggests that the use of dialect conjures up to the older generation of his day their "schoolday innocence", that it is associated "not only with that old time which is uniformly conceived as more pure, lofty, and simple than the present, but also with the soft and bright colours of remembered childhood". It is typical of him to distribute these emotions between old age and infancy, both of which he was entitled to regard as foreign to his own state of ever-increasing cultivation. Mention of "remembered childhood" recalls his persistent mockery of the Lake Poets. Wordsworth in particular, for their "lowliness of tone", which he equated with "silliness", "rusticity" and "childishness". What must have oppressed him in these associations was their remoteness from "polished life", their ill-fittedness to the world of affairs to which he considered he properly belonged. Whether or not he had a secret admiration for something (and it is said that he knew Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* by heart) whatever was connected with the "silly" or "childish" side of life had to be publicly reviled.

So the Jeffrey we are reading in these pages (less than one tenth of *Contributions*, which was in turn less than a third of his total contribution to the *Review*) is only the critic he thought the world would wish him to be. History has proved him wrong, but perhaps he would not have minded: he was consistent with his original explanation of the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* as an amusement, and once he was made Lord Advocate in 1829 he relinquished the editorship and rarely contributed thereafter. It would not have seemed right of him to do so, and the taps which had once flowed no wonderfully were turned off, quite as easily, it seems, as they had been turned on.

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"dangerous and turbulent emotions" continued to worry him. Half of the many appealing anecdotes concerning Jeffrey emphasize his personal warmth and charm, even sentimentality. When Mrs Siddons called on him unannounced and found him in floods of tears, she assumed he had suffered a dreadful bereavement—in fact, he had been reading *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Moore remembered that as the seconds fumbled with the pistols in preparation for their duel, Jeffrey talked cheerfully about the weather; the resolute refusal to display his deepest feelings in his writing has demanded a legend to balance it.

One of the effects of his personal repression was in keeping with the time. That "oddy pronounced diction" which Moore noticed as Jeffrey lay blethering on the prison bench was the result of his poor attempt to do what many Scottish gentlemen of the eighteenth and nineteenth (and twentieth) centuries felt they had to do: cast off their native accents, which were considered to be, well, "absurd, puerile, incongruous, vulgar". Yet it is interesting to discover that Carlyle, who spent many hours in conversation with him (they fell out when Carlyle rejected his advice on a social matter) felt he was most himself when he could let "got to speak Scotch". The general remarks Jeffrey makes in the Burns essay, and elsewhere on Scott, show how great an affection, and admiration, he had for the unique robustness of Scots, even if he did not think it quite the thing for a grown-up to speak it.

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## The predicament of Scottish poetry

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# Chronicling the chroniclers

R. B. Dobson

ANTONIA GRANSDEN

*Historical Writing in England, II: c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* 644pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £30. 0 7100 0480 X

The late V. H. Galbraith used to claim that he preferred reading medieval chronicles to modern novels – not perhaps a taste shared by many readers in the past five hundred years. Like all good historians, Polydore Vergil, that Italian apostle of the new style of history as well as the new style of learning at the court of Henry VIII, had ovestated interest in denigrating the work of his predecessors, but to some extent the reputation of the medieval English chroniclers has never quite recovered from his abrupt dismissal of them all, with the possible exceptions of the Venerable Bede, William of Malmesbury and Matthew Paris, as *medii, rudes, indigesti ac invidiosi*. By the end of the sixteenth century, Thomas Nashe, more attracted to late medieval history than most members of the large Elizabethan literary underworld, produced his famous sneer that the vernacular chroniclers of fifteenth-century London had been only "lay chonographers that write of nothing but of Mayors and Sheriffs and the dear year and the great frost". Fifty years later Milton similarly could doubt that most historians in medieval England were positively "blockish"; and even in the early nineteenth century Henry Hallam was prepared to go on record with the view that the historical tradition of the Middle Ages was "absolutely contemptible".

Modern historians have learnt, properly enough, to be considerably more circumspect in their criticisms of their distant English precursors; but he would be a brave man who would claim that medieval chronicles and annals are actually read more nowadays than they were in the age of Sir Walter Scott. It is a sobering thought that of the scores of authors discussed in this monumental survey hardly any have ever had their work translated into English, and the only two to have been published under the auspices of the admirable series of Penguin Classics are Jean Froissart and Philippe de Commines, hardly typical of the native English historical tradition.

The most important question raised by Antonio Gransden's magisterial study is accordingly whether it will persuade its readers that the late medieval chroniclers of England actually deserve to be studied more sympathetically, more dispassionately and more attentively than hitherto. To that question, despite many important qualifications made by Dr Gransden herself, the answer must be yes. By any standards the publication of this massive work of synthesis is a major event; together with its predecessor, *Historical Writing in England, c.1307*, which appeared in 1974, this is a book which should do more than any other recent work to ensure not so much perhaps the rehabilitation of the chronicles as the likelihood that they will now be approached with greater understanding and enthusiasm than in the past. One supposes, after all, that not even Galbraith actually read more medieval English chronicles than has Dr Gransden, and if, as is often alleged, Matthew Paris should win the prize for being the most prolific of English historians of the Middle Ages, she too deserves the warmest of congratulations on the completion of her own herculean task. All credit having been paid to the work of previous scholars in this vast field, notably to C. L. Kingsford, Dr Gransden has not only confirmed her reputation as a historian of formidable erudition as well as energy.

To impose an intelligible pattern on the highly diverse and at times positively incoherent historical writing of later medieval England is itself an exceptionally difficult undertaking. All the more commendable is Dr Gransden's success in travelling with so clear a head along the tortuous paths that lead from the anonymous *Vita Edwardi Secundi* and William Rishanger to the (altogether unrepresentative) climax of Polydore Vergil and Thomas More's *History of*

King Richard III. This is an admirably lucid and well-balanced survey, with whose general estimates of the quality and reliability of the writers discussed no late medievalist is likely to be in serious disagreement. Dr Gransden was perhaps unfortunate in that her own work went to press before the publication of the late L. C. Hector's and Barbara F. Harvey's *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381-1394*, the model of what a successful modern edition of a late medieval chronicle should be. But within the restrictions of space inherent in such a comprehensive survey, Dr Gransden does very reasonable rough justice to the medieval writers she discusses and can occasionally provide them with an opportunity to speak, usually entertainingly, for themselves. One ends the reading of her book, for example, with the sense that Ranulf Higden of Chester and Thomas Walsingham of St Albans do indeed deserve the distinction of being the only two late medieval English practitioners of the historiographical art to warrant a chapter to themselves. Higden is again revealed, as in John Taylor's more detailed study of his *Polychronicon*, to be the possessor of a more ambitious and at times bizarrely imaginative concept of world history than any of his contemporaries; while it is also altogether appropriate that the longest and most lively of Dr Gransden's portraits should be that of the most enjoyably idiosyncratic of late medieval chroniclers, Thomas Walsingham. Whether or not Walsingham at times intensely homiletic tone and "unmistakable if unspeakable" Latin prose style derive from the tradition of late fourteenth-century preaching, it should surely not be long before some ambitious scholar takes up the mantle of Galbraith and produces a new edition of late medieval England's most evocative historian.

Any scholar who surveys an arena of literary activity as large and varied as this must at times feel, like the twelfth-century chronicler, Gervase of Canterbury, that "compilare, potius quam scribere, cupio". Inevitably, there are several instances in the course of this long book where the reader would have benefited from seeing Dr Gransden's own views deployed at greater length: does John of Tynemouth's enormous fourteenth-century *Historia Aurea* deserve no

more than a few passing references? And how seriously is the historian to take Alison Hanham's recent highly iconoclastic interpretation of More's *Richard III*? However, one would be thoroughly mistaken to interpret Dr Gransden's "Flores Historiarum" as Roger of Wendover of St Albans once presented his own – a selection of choice flowers from the graves of the venerable deceased. Quite apart from her enviable mastery of the voluminous and highly scattered secondary literature, she shows herself capable of solving some difficult problems of authorship and attribution on her own account, ranging (in her appendices) from the mysterious and now lost chronicle attributed to John Tiptot, earl of Worcester, to the manuscript history of the news-letter announcing "The Arrival of Edward IV". A similarly acute and discerning eye is often turned on the texts of the chronicles and annals themselves, as indeed upon those somewhat eccentric fifteenth-century "antiquaries", John Rous and William Worcester. Whether the work of these two men quite warrants the view that "antiquarian studies underwent a remarkable development in the fifteenth century", perhaps remains a little less certain than it is currently fashionable to believe; but Dr Gransden is undoubtedly at her interesting best when discussing the "sacred research" that underlay such comparatively unfamiliar local "histories" as those of Thomas Burton of Meaux, Thomas Rudborne of St Swinburn, Winchester, and Thomas Elmham of St Augustine's, Canterbury.

But whether "sacred research" should be a quality high on the list of priorities among those who enter such a fascinating field is another matter entirely. Nearly every page of Dr Gransden's study reminds us of the sensitive issues that lie in wait for those who wish to embark upon the scrutiny of "historical writing" by authors who would have had little comprehension of that phrase's modern meaning and associations. Here is a volume which demonstrates exceptionally clearly that when a few years ago Barnard Guenée asked "Y a-t-il une historiographie médiévale?" he was raising a fundamental question. It goes without saying that no scholar could have written a work of this calibre had he or she become accessively absorbed by the intricate problems of definition

and delimitation of genre which surround the subject. In some ways, for instance, it is a positive relief that Dr Gransden devotes so little attention to debating the possible distinctions between "chronicles" and "annals", an issue which used to engage the intentions of Bishop Stubbs and Sir Maurice Powicke to no particularly fruitful effect. On the other hand, it can hardly be denied that the very concept of "historical writing" is a modern abstraction imposed somewhat arbitrarily upon the realities of medieval thought about the past. As recent studies by Jean-Pierre Genet have been at pains to emphasize, a comprehensive account of the historical sense of late medieval Englishmen will increasingly take the inquirer into fields as diverse as the treatises produced by common lawyers and the cartularies compiled by anonymous monks.

Similarly, it is rapidly becoming apparent that the application to English chronicles of the techniques of medieval literary textual scholarship will soon have a major impact on our understanding of both their composition and their function. Although such approaches sometimes run the risk of going to ludicrous extremes, as in Harriet Hansan's recent study of the chronicle authorities for the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, under close examination much so-called historical writing of late medieval England will probably emerge as considerably less artless, and much less committed to straightforward "reportage", than is currently assumed.

There are, however, other and more familiar problems which Dr Gransden's learned survey brings more sharply into focus than ever before. If, as seems plausible enough, "history" was useful, and "propaganda" was of service to the kings and to their opponents alike, why was it in fact used so comparatively little – especially by the English monarchs of the fifteenth century? The government of Edward III did find it helpful on at least one occasion to summon Ranulf Higden from Chester "with all your chronicles to speak and treat with the council"; but when at the end of the next century there developed a vested interest in rehabilitating the reputation of the last Lancastrian king who emerged was not history but the quite exceptionally jejune hagiographical

point of pride not to translate anything to scholarly works). But Merz has to refer to an admirable wealth of secondary material; this strength is its most useful in the three chapters on "At War", "Peace and 'Redeintions'", and "Religion". The book is well organized and readily accessible through the excellent index (though flow in the most interesting of these chapters, on Arthur's relationships, is the Maria undercuts the importance of the uncle/master's son complex).

The book has other virtues, and Morris's decisive critical judgement of the thirteenth-century French *roman* and his coherent view of history are a valuable work of reference. One's only and uning reservation is not about the book's scholarly substance but about Dr Morris's perversion of Arthurian literature by making the figure of the king the touchstone of a

memoir of Henry VI by John Blacman. Or again, if "both royal and nobleman liked to read of little in history in the chivalric style", why did Froissart have no fifteenth-century successors on this side of the English Channel? No doubt part of the answer, though itself somewhat questionable, lies in the low status accorded to historical writing by more sophisticated medieval authors; and it is abundantly clear from Dr Gransden's conspectus that nowhere in England, nor even in fifteenth-century London, did the practice of writing historical works generate enough communal momentum to promote a genuinely self-perpetuating and self-improving tradition. Not for the first or last time in the history of English literature and learning may be tempted to the thought that the monopoly of higher academic education by its two ancient universities also had its own inhibiting rather than exhilarating effect: remarkably few of the many names discussed by Dr Gransden are known to have had any association with either university, and for those who did, university education left few discernible effects on the way they wrote. Oxford and Cambridge, in other words, do not furnish lengthy entries in the 125-page index to this volume, an index which itself deserves a prize as being even more encyclopaedic than the text it accompanies.

For once, in fact, the index is altogether justified: this is a volume which no one interested in either the history or the literature of the medieval England can afford to do without. Dr Gransden would have met with the wholehearted approval of fifteenth-century chroniclers themselves; in some work of John Copgrave, which apply more forcefully to herself, "I have written my possibility been, occupied a writing, especially to gather all expositions upon scripture into a collection; and those that were dispersed in many books, my labour was to bring them into a body so that they which come after shall not have much labour in seeking of the process." Not only for that labour, but for their success in suggesting new points of departure, the two volumes of *Historical Writing in England* will remain invaluable for very many years to come.

cannot be". Such a composite, however, does not correspond to any single one of the contradictory presentations of Arthur: in Layamon's *Brut*, for instance, this is exceptional, we are told, "like a most trusting person, Arthur is trustworthy"; in Geoffrey of Monmouth, he is a Christian hero; in Chretien, he is spiritually null. This search for Arthur is an extreme instance of the belief in the character's independence of the text which contains him, of the "How many children had Lady Mordred?" variety. There is, in fact, no "essential Arthur", such as is claimed at the conclusion of the chapter on "Personal Attributes". "Everything which happens in the Arthurian world individuates Arthur: that is why his very name carries such magic." But this is not individuality; in this sense "Arthur" is hardly a more personal term than "Romance".

These enthusiastic chapter-ending sentences (the final one declares that "By re-creating the tragedy of Everyman [Arthur] wins a permanent place in the human heart") are very untypical of the painstaking, sometimes indigestible, substance of the book. It is not directed at the casual reader; Morris says (accurately) that she is assuming "an exclusive Arthurian knowledge", and taking as read Leamon's *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*. Looms is not too esoteric a requirement, but the density of Morris's scholarly reference makes heavy demands on the reader's imagination. There is very little relieving textual illustration and none of what there is translated (not even the Welsh phrases; it is increasingly a

Kevin Crossley-Holland in *The Anglo-Saxon World* (278pp. Boydell, 20.25). 85115-169 8 presents, in its own tradition, a series of Anglo-Saxon writings: chronicles, laws, letters, charters and such magnificent poems as *Beowulf* and *The Battle of Maldon*. He writes, "It is a period that itself particularly well to an anthology of this kind for the supply of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts is so large and inexhaustible, and it has been possible to include most of the greater poems in their entirety." *The Anglo-Saxon World* also contains a series of introductions to the works which place them in a literary and historical context.

## Other points of view

Peter Winch

ELVIN HATCH

*Culture and Morality: The Relativity of Values in Anthropology* 163pp. Columbia University Press. \$36 (paperback, \$16.50). 0 231 05589 7

Quite a lot of space on the main news pages of the *New York Times* was devoted recently to discussion of a then still unpublished book by Derek Freeman attacking the validity of Margaret Mead's account of Samoan life in the 1920s. I am sure that the widespread interest of which this was a symptom was not merely in the rival scientific claims of biological and cultural determinism within anthropology. When we learn of peoples whose customs and values seem to be very different from, even opposed to, our own, our whole conception of life is challenged. Our own practices and ways of thinking may even be importantly changed through exposure to such accounts.

This is said to have happened amongst the American middle classes as a result of *Coming of Age in Samoa* – a result not so far perhaps from Margaret Mead's intention.

One of the many merits of Elvin Hatch's lively account of the vicissitudes of ethical relativism in cultural anthropology is that it never loses sight of these ramifications transcending the boundaries of a particular academic specialism. But what kind of relevance, logically speaking, do the anthropological facts have for our own moral attitudes? It is intelligible enough that contact with a not very new way of looking at things should have an impact on our own view of life. Still, on the face of it there seems no particular reason why reaction to this impact has to go one way rather than another. Indignation at the obscene blasphemies of the heathen is no more logically out of court than is the reflection that it takes all sorts to make a world. To this extent there is much to be said for those writers whom Professor Hatch quotes as rejecting the claims of Franz Boas and his relativistic followers to "ethical neutrality" and as pointing out that

they set up tolerance, at least, as a positive cross-cultural value.

However, the nature of the issue between the Boasian relativists and their opponents is not as clear as that last comment might suggest. Consider this key passage from page 98 of the book under review:

They [sic, certain critics of relativism] may be right that we are not led directly to the concept of freedom by the supposed fact that there are no general cross-cultural ethical principles. Yet the reverse does seem to hold. Given the value of freedom, or the moral belief that people ought to be free to conduct their affairs as they choose, it follows that we ought to be tolerant of other ways of life.

The position stated in the second sentence is clearly not the "reverse" of that rejected in the first. In fact it looks tautologous and continues to do so if turned round: Given that we ought to be tolerant of other ways of life, then people ought to be free to conduct their affairs in their own way. Plainly whatever an "absence of cross-cultural principles" is, it cannot be identified

with an obligation to be tolerant. If "absence of cross-cultural principles" simply means that there are no principles at all in which members of all cultures would agree, then that entails nothing about whether or not we ought to be tolerant. If it means that there are no principles at all which can be meaningfully applied by members of one culture to the institutions or practices of another, what follows is that there can be no principle enjoining either tolerance or intolerance on our part towards the institutions or practices of another culture. If it means that the fact that participants in one culture are bound by a certain principle does not entail that participants in another culture are also so bound, then nothing at all follows about whether or not we should be tolerant; all that follows is that if it is indeed the case that we should be tolerant towards other cultures, this does not entail that participants in those other cultures should also be tolerant towards us or towards each other.

I think that "ethical relativism", expressed in such terms as these, is just a mess. The deep problems that come to light when we try to apply our moral categories to the lives of people in very alien cultures lie in a different, though adjacent, area. If we understand perfectly well the significance of a piece of conduct occurring in another society, we need find it no harder to evaluate morally than we should a comparable piece of conduct occurring in our own society. But it is just that understanding of significance, of what a piece of conduct is, that we may find elusive, so that it is not clear to us what exactly we are trying to evaluate.

These are problems belonging to what Hatch calls "the relativity of knowledge", which he acknowledges at the outset to be closely related to "ethical relativism", but which he does not all the same consider closely enough. Perhaps surprisingly in an anthropologist, he does not consider at all in a general way the particular, and particularly important, problems

involved in the relativity of our knowledge of human actions. He does see though that these problems re-emerge in the interpretation of the limit he would set to tolerance, namely the spectacle of illegitimate coercion used against human beings. Hatch gives a fine, strong statement of this principle of intervention – free, God be praised, of any attempt at logical or scientific "proof".

The image I have in mind . . . is that of the passer-by who happens upon a crime of violence and stops to help the victim. It is true that the possibility always exists that something may go wrong – I may mistake victim for villain, for instance. But if we hear screams in a dark alley, how can we walk away and say it is none of our business? And should we stop and help, we do not signify that we believe we are superior to either the wrong-doer or the sufferer.

When Jesus said something similar to the man who wanted to know "Who is my neighbour?" he concluded with the words, "Go and do thou likewise". He did not try to spell out what "likewise" should mean. That work is for us to do in the circumstances of particular cases. When judgments have to be made across cultural boundaries, a large part of that work has to consist, as Hatch notes, in trying to understand "the perspective of the people themselves" whose behaviour is being considered. That is the perspective within which the concept "likewise" has to be applied. But that has little to do with "relativity of values"; it has to do with making sure one knows what one is talking about.

However, though this book does seem to me to leave some of the most fundamental questions inadequately treated, it does in that respect faithfully portray that discipline whose history it sketches. A great deal of material is displayed elegantly in its short space. And the fundamental questions are at least raised or suggested. It deserves to be read.

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## Agoraphobia

Here comes the wind with a cloud on its arm  
Wafting high over these acres of warm  
Pasture and stubble and joining the trees  
In their spirited choreographies.

How should we greet it? Is raising a hat  
Considered uncivil on broadlands or flat  
Levels of meadow that fold up to where  
The shape of a hill makes the wind disappear?

Surely it's spotted us, lifted above  
The details of trivial landscape by love  
And joined in each other by hands that have grown,  
Under the weather, a lattice of bone.

Fear takes you from the like straw on the wind,  
The old and abandoned nest of the mind  
Goes scattering over promiscuous weald.  
Sunshine. Your back's inappropriate shield.

John Levett



# Making a stand against habit

Vicki Feaver

Sylvia Townsend Warner

Letters  
Edited by William Maxwell  
311pp. Chatto and Windus. £15.  
0 7011 2603 5

Collected Poems  
Edited with an Introduction by  
Claire Harman  
290pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £9.95.  
0 85635 339 6

In the course of Sylvia Townsend Warner's first novel *Lolly Willowes* she suddenly awakes on the heroine that she is a witch by vocation. It is a discovery that not only liberates her from a life as a much put-upon spinster-aid but also enables her to view the world with the eyes of a poet: noticing for the first time "the sudden oblique movements of the water-drops that glistened on the cabbage-leaves, or the affinity between the dishevelled brown hearts of the sunflowers and Mrs Leek's scrubbing-brush, propped up on the kitchen window-sill". The novel is not exactly a self-portrait - Warner's fiction is never overtly autobiographical but it is possible to connect Lolly's stani against "habit and the cowardice of compunction" her imaginative awakening and growing awareness of being "different" with Warner's recognition both of her gift as a poet and, possibly, of her homosexuality. She made the "discovery that it was possible to write poetry" in 1922 during a month spent exploring the Essex marshes; so when, a couple of years later, she described how even in Lolly's dreary London existence

the ruling power of her life had assuaged her with dreams and intimations, calling her imagination out from the warm room to wander in darkened fields and by desolate sea-bords, through marshes and fens, and along the outskirts of brooding woods,

she was almost certainly writing from her own experience.

Born in 1893, the only child of a master at Harrow, Warner's first ambition was to be a composer. If the First World War had not intervened she would have gone to Germany to study with Schoenberg. As it was she became a musicologist, one of four editions of OUP's ten-volume *Tudor Church Music*, "romantically engaged in tracing, scoring and collating Misses, Motets and so on by the Henrician and Elizabethan composers, which only exist in contemporary MSS part-books," as she put it in a note for a publisher's blurb. It was, she admitted, a hoard of throw-away sheets of the "beautiful smooth white photographic paper" used for her work that first inspired her to write down poems. She showed some of them to her friend David Garnett and he suggested sending them to Chatto and Windus.

The resulting interview with Charles Prentice, then head of the firm, was, she wrote in a letter of 1924, "like a nightmare, or a religious ceremony". Prentice was impressed with both the objectivity and the variety of her work and he published her first collection *The Shepherd* in 1925. This was followed by *Time Imparted* (1928), *Opus 7* (1931), *Whether a Dove or Sengul* (with Valentine Ackland, 1933), *Boxwood* (1937), *King Duffus* and *Other Poems* (a pamphlet, 1968) and *Twelve Poems* (1980). Warner also published seven novels, a much acclaimed biography of T. H. White and numerous short stories - 144 of them in the *New Yorker*.

During her lifetime her reputation was founded almost entirely on her prose. The posthumous publication of the marvellous *Twelve Poems*, however, suggested that her earlier poetry deserved fresh attention; and now with Carcanet's publication of her *Collected Poems* it is possible to consider her poetic achievement as a whole.

Appearing at the same time, Warner's *Letters* might be expected to provide some insights into the poems. In fact they are much more revealing about her prose. The only real clue to which she describes (telling us while it is that poem of Emily Dickinson's

The solemnest of industries enacted here on earth". It is Dickinson's voice that seems so often to be lurking behind the faux-naïf rhythms and observations of her first two volumes. Other echoes are of de la Mare, Crabbe, and the Metaphysical poets - reflected in her fondness for conceits. It is probably true to argue though, as Claire Harman does in her introduction to the *Collected Poems*, that "as far as Warner was 'like' any other poet in her early years, she was likeliest to Hardy".

Like Hardy, Warner is obsessively concerned with craftsmanship, with the "making" of a poem. Like Hardy she exploits the ballad for its ironic and, in a poem such as "The Image", progressively chilling effects. She is also adept at mixing the macabre and comic: "The Country Churchyard", for example, recalls the grim humour of Hardy's talking dead. "Ghosts at Chaldon Herring" with its reflections on the pairs of dead invers who choose

Thus their mouldered dears  
To meet again  
Whom long misused  
Of marriage, infants and tears  
And the slow grudge of age  
Washed and estranged  
Is Hardy-esque, and yet at the same time it could almost be a criticism of this desire to create a fantasy past with Emma; the poem's unblinkered denouement exposes the lovers' new-found togetherness as a delusion.

In poem after poem Warner either pricks the romantic bubble or undermines the conventional point of view. Least successful of the early poems are those in which she attempts to convey the complexities of her own feelings. Either she is unsatisfyingly evasive, or she works too hard at an elaborate conceit (in "The Possession", for example), or, in the case of the ambitious "The Virgin and the Scales", there's an uneasy alliance between anecdote and parable.

The quality of "immediacy" that Warner found in the writers she most admired - Emily Brontë and Christina Rossetti, for example - results, as she argued in a talk on "Women as Writers" included in the Appendix to the *Collected Poems*, only when the reader is "no longer aware of the author's chaperoning presence". In her own work this happens most often when her imagination is fixed on "something other than herself: the sound of a lawn-mower in 'Sad Green', a dairy maid who, it was said, would yield herself to any wanderer who chanced to come to her lonely dwelling in 'Nelly Trim'".

Warner discovered Crabbe when, "poor, hungry and sensual", as she put it, she was first living in London. "I read him," she wrote to a friend, "as though I were writing him; and there is no comparable excitement to that." *Opus 7*, a long poem in rhyming couplets relating the tale of Rebecca Random who "lived on bread and lived for gin", was presumably the direct result of this enthusiasm. It contains some nice contemporary touches - a *Daily Mail* headline: *Buckingham Palace Drinking Lemonade*; a trip to the local Woolworth's to buy brightly coloured packets of seeds - but the poem as a whole suffers from the dusty air of piousness.

*Whether a Dove or Sengul* (1933) was a joint venture with her companion/lover Valentine Ackland in which the two women concealed their authorship of individual poems and for this reason it has been excluded from the *Collected Poems*. The huge gap between this volume and *Boxwood* (1937) is accounted for by the fact that, as Reynolds Stone suggests, that from then on she thought of herself primarily as a novelist and short-story writer, not as a poet. Occasional poems appeared in magazines but many of them, especially those written in the 1930s, were heavily influenced by Edward Thomas ("Mangolds", for example, or "Here in the Corner of the Field"). "Walking, through Meadows" is one of a group of poems that deals with the Spanish Civil War (she and Valentine Ackland were

both at that time Communists and sympathizers with the Republican cause), seems to be an attempt to adapt "As the Team's Head Brass" to that conflict. As with nearly all her attempts to reproduce Thomas's conversational manner it is wordy and laboured. Her poems were far more successful when she stuck to her own sparer, more "musical" style.

The publication dates of *Boxwood* (1937), *King Duffus* (1968) and *Last Poems* (1981) are partly misleading. There are poems in all three which date from the 1940s. The title poem of *King Duffus*, for example, as well as "Anne Donne" and "Lady Macbeth's Daughter" are from a group entitled "Seven Conjectural Readings" of 1948, three more of which - "The Wife of King Heleas", "Monsieur de Grignan" and "A Leper" - are included in the section of "Uncollected and Unpublished Poems". Like the extraordinary "Glorious Dying" (Twelve Poems) they are all dramatic monologues. Whereas the usual role of protagonists in dramatic monologues is to disclose, albeit inadvertently, their own misdeeds or failings, Warner's characters are not agents but victims. Their function is not to set up a tension between the reader's sympathy and judgment - we are meant to sympathize with them - but to challenge the received view of things. Thus King Duffus, restored to health when the hags who have been slowly melting his waxen image are put to death, complains at being summoned back to his "vexed kingdom" from a state where, he claims,

My crown lay lightly on my brow as a clot of foam.  
My wide mantle was yellow as the flower of the broom.

## Scenes of torture

Fleur Adcock

MARGARET ATWOOD

True Stories  
103pp. Cape. £3.95.  
0 224 02071 4

P.K. PAGE

Evening Dance of the Grey Flies  
95pp. Oxford University Press.  
£4.25.  
0 19 540381 9

NICKI JACKOWSKA

Earthwalks  
42pp. Sunderland: Cooilfrith Press.  
£3.50.  
0 904461 75 0

The title poem of Margaret Atwood's new collection reflects her concern with the relations between truth and fiction: "The true story is vicious / and multiple and untrue / after all. Why do you / need it?" The volume also includes five tiny prose pieces called "True Romances", a phrase which actually implies untruth. This interest in the nature of fiction has always been present in her work, both in the poems (with such lines as "That was a lie also") and in the novels, where the characters tend to live double lives, to conceal parts of their history, to "live a lie".

Atwood was a poet before she became a novelist, but now that she is both it seems necessary to take the poems into account when considering her poetry. The two forms are not, for her, wholly separate; neither contains more "truth" than the other. They cover the same imaginative territory and the themes and preoccupations of the poems have usually sooner or later been enlarged on in the novels. It is as if the poems were scouts exploring a terrain (the North Quebec landscape, or Canadian nationalism, or the things more thoroughly in prose. If we knew only the poems, they would seem sufficient and indeed admirable as it is the novels are so witty, powerful and adroit that the poems look a little bare by comparison. One admires the scope, setting, but misses the characters and plot.

Hale and holy I was in mind and limb.

The Leper, instead of welcoming his cure, resents the return to sensation ("Silvered in my snail shell / I am almost at peace"). Monsieur Grignan, husband to Madme de Sévigné's daughter, protests that he is already "A letter back cypher, the man of her mother's daughter / The man who unloosed the dove, and romanced for that alone."

For forty years Warner, again like Hardy, went on using the same forms - ballad, folk-song, monologue, lyric. The language of some of the early poems is as austere and economical as the later ones; the poems in *King Duffus* and *Twelve Poems* are not different, just consistently better. Whether writing about her own approaching death ("Azrael"), or voicing the thoughts of the dying Queen Elizabeth I as she lies on the floor ("How tall my people are! Like a race of trees / They sway, sigh, nod heads, rustle above me"), or of a mother sitting in her squalid cottage, flies crawling on the ceiling, singing to a child whose eyes are like "jewels new-fetched from the dark", or telling the story of Earl Cassili's Lady who runs away on to the boat not for pleasure, or glamour, or even because she is unhappy, but because "I remembered I was young / And had to put myself into song" the effect is to use her own words about another writer, of "a queer brilliant verisimilitude".

If Warner's best poems succeed by her absence then the opposite is true of her letters. Edited by William Maxwell (her one-time editor on the *New Yorker* and a recipient of

some letters) and dating from 1921 until just before her death in 1978, they form the record of what was ostensibly a retired and uneventful life in the country. Incident is provided by the war (knowing that, the problems of what to cook and so on), by tips abroad, unwelcome visits from relations, by the ups and downs of a writer's life ("I am beginning to feel as though I had plighted my vows to a refrigerator"), she complained to Maxwell in 1947, depressed by the New Yorker's dilatory response; but when really makes these letters come alive is Warner's capacity to turn the stuff of ordinary existence into a stream of perceptive, witty, compassionate and sometimes tart observation.

The contrast Claire Harman notes between the quiet tones of Warner's poems and her "sharp and fast-moving" prose is particularly evident when it comes to her letters. Some of them, though, almost as poems, are lists of things: "a bumper of pawpaws, a jar of Guatemala honey, half a dozen hibiscus bushes, an Indian Baby, some snow off a volcano, three hummingbirds, and one hundred and forty-four (twelve dozen) yards of the convolvulus. And a pink sunshade she wants her friend Paul Nordoff to send her from Central America, for example - and it is tempting to speculate on what the effect might have been if she had allowed some of the exuberance to spill over into the restrained, well-wrought, timeless world of her poems. More real cause for regret, however, considering the strangely compelling quality of her work, is that poetry was for most of her life a peripheral and not a major concern.

P. K. Page, an older Canadian poet, dwells more on the surface of things describing flowers, birds and gardens with the delighted absorption of a visual artist - which she also is. The minute intricacies of her drawings find a verbal parallel in her fondness for such words and phrases as "filigree", "calligraphy", "allevy", "fractured", "crystalline and pruned". As a result her poems have a decorative charm but are sometimes too pretty for their own good, or, in a few cases, flabby or portentous.

The impulse behind much of this collection is a spiritual quest, which expresses itself in highly coloured visionary language, full of glittering metaphors and silken textures. Mystical experiences are so resistant to language that they may, as well as described in these terms as in any others, but one can have a surfeit of gold mesh, gold sheen and trembling brilliance. The successes here tend to be in less ambitious areas: "Snowshoes", "Phone Call from Mexico" (flawed but patently cooing), and "Full Moon". The volume also includes a short story, which the end of the world is written, a characteristically for this writer, a alteration in the perception of colours.

Nicki Jackowska has an ear for rhythms and a vigorous appetite for images, but she has chosen to devote these oodgements to surrealism, "staring" phrases and concepts, amongst any genuine originality. She is fond of disintegration and decay - bones and stains abound; "stale", "dusty" are favourite adjectives - and of sinister domestic interiors. She seems to enjoy word-games of the well-researched book, first published in 1978, makes more progress in attempting to discover what qualities made this unique, brilliant comedian such a success. He concentrates on Hancock's professional career, and only refers to the details of his tragic private life "in so far as they directly affected his work". A number of jokes extracted from the scripts, most of which were written by those inspired comic talents: Galtoun, Simpson, help the reader recall that wonderful anonymous creation of Hancock's (Anthony John Bewane,

Archaeology

LESLEY AOKINS and ROY A. AOKINS. *The Handbook of British Archaeology*. 319pp. Macmillan. £5.95. 0 333 34843 5. First published in 1982 by David and Charles under the title *A Thesaurus of British Archaeology*, it is intended primarily as a work of reference covering the Palaeolithic to Medieval periods and contains numerous drawings and diagrams.

Architecture

SEBASTIANO SERLIO. *The Five Books of Architecture*. Unnumbered pp. Dover. £12. 0 486 24349 4. The first five of Serlio's books of architecture, dealing with "Geometrie, Perspective, Antiquitie, Rules for Masonry, and the Divers Figures of Temples", appeared in Venice and Paris between the years 1537 and 1547. They were translated into Dutch in 1606 and thence into English in 1611. This edition reproduces photographically and at 95 per cent of its size that first English edition, and so makes generally available a very rare book which had considerable influence on English architecture both in its principles and in details, which were imitated by architects as diverse as John Smythson and Inigo Jones. The text is printed in a murky black-letter, which slows down the process of reading the engaging and idiosyncratic prose; but the overall impression, with the heavy strapwork of the title pages, the crowded woodcuts, the punctilious advice and the wider speculation of some passages, is of a jostling enthusiasm in presenting a new body of observation and discipline, out of which, as Serlio says of the design of St Peter's, "the ingenious workman may help himself". A.J.G.H.

Biography and Memoirs

ISAAC DISENEN. *Letters from Africa 1914-1937*. Edited by FRANK LARSON. Translated by ANNA BORN. 473pp. Picador. £3.95. 0 330 26866 X. First published in England by Weidenfeld and Nicolson in 1981 (and reviewed in the TLS of September 11, 1981), the great majority of these letters which are, as it were, the raw material of *Out of Africa*, are to Isaac Disenen's mother Ingeborg Disenen, and to her devoted brother Thomas. They give a detailed account of her life in Africa in all its aspects: her marital difficulties which ended in divorce, her struggles; ultimately unsuccessful, to make her farm financially viable, her dealings with and attitudes to the natives, her relationship with Denys Finch Hatton, and the agony which he caused her to have. In the end, to leave Africa. Her letters are also a substitute for the conversation and intellectual stimulation which she only rarely had access to; they show her intelligence grappling with the mere abstract questions of marriage and morality, and are thus a mixture of detailed factual reporting, and deep and sustained thought. M.F.

WALTER LAQUEUR. *Europe Since Hitler*. 607pp. Penguin. £5.95. 0 14 02 1411 9. In his preface to the revised edition of *Europe Since Hitler*, first published as *The Rebirth of Europe* in 1970, Walter Laqueur writes: "Re-reading the book more than twelve years later I found need for only minor changes. My conclusion was too optimistic." In a 60-page afterword he gives a brief country-by-country account of political and economic trends during the last decade and traces the changing attitude, from the high expectations on the eve of détente to the late 1960s, through the growing feeling of political and military impotence, to a new "mood of accommodation". He concludes by deploring "the willingness to let things slide instead of making the effort to reduce the risks to the survival of free institutions in Europe". E.W.

KENNETH MCNAUGHT. *The Pelican History of Canada*. 382pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 021083 0. First published in 1969 and revised and updated in 1976 and 1982.

MAURICE RAMBERT. *Quicksilver*. 231pp. Macmillan. £4.95. 0 333 34799 4. First published in 1972. The TLS reviewer (August 18, 1972) wrote: "It is her capacity still to be amazed and deeply moved by new discoveries which keeps her, at eighty-four, so incredibly (as she would say) young."

ROGER WILMUT. *Tony Hancock's Artistic*. 270pp. Methuen. £3.95. 0 413 30820 X. Tony Hancock, according to a television producer, "tried to examine himself... to try to find out what actually made him the star that he obviously was... And examining himself he found nothing. I think this put the fear of God into him." Roger Wilmut in this well-researched book, first published in 1978, makes more progress in attempting to discover what qualities made this unique, brilliant comedian such a success. He concentrates on Hancock's professional career, and only refers to the details of his tragic private life "in so far as they directly affected his work". A number of jokes extracted from the scripts, most of which were written by those inspired comic talents: Galtoun, Simpson, help the reader recall that wonderful anonymous creation of Hancock's (Anthony John Bewane,

however, Anthony Aloysius St John on the screen) so full of suburban pride and prejudice. A.J.H.

Drama

MARGOT HEINEMANN. *Puritanism and Theatre*. Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts. 300pp. Cambridge University Press. £6.95. 0 521 27052 9. First published in 1980. Margot Heinemann examines Thomas Middleton's work in relation to the society and social movements of his time, and traces the connection this work may have had with radical, Parliamentary or Puritan groups.

History

GEORGEY BEST. *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts*. 408pp. Methuen. £6.95. 0 416 34810 6. First published in 1980 by Weidenfeld and Nicolson. The paperback edition has an added postscript which discusses the issues involved in the Falklands conflict and raises questions in connection with wars in the Middle and Far East, Central America and Africa.

JOHN BREWER and JOHN STYLES (Editors). *An Ungovernable People: The English and their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. 400pp. Hutchinson. £6.95. 0 09 138201 7. First published in 1980, each essay in this collection focuses on a particular source of conflict - the price and shipment of grain, the building of turnpike roads, for example - to assess attitudes to "the law" and authority.

WOLF HECKMANN. *Rommel's War in Africa*. 512pp. Granada. £2.95. 0 586 05635 1. Translated by Stephen Soase, with a foreword by General Sir John Hackett. First published in Germany under the title *Rommel's Krieg in Afrika*, and in Britain in 1981.

WALTER LAQUEUR. *Europe Since Hitler*. 607pp. Penguin. £5.95. 0 14 02 1411 9. In his preface to the revised edition of *Europe Since Hitler*, first published as *The Rebirth of Europe* in 1970, Walter Laqueur writes: "Re-reading the book more than twelve years later I found need for only minor changes. My conclusion was too optimistic." In a 60-page afterword he gives a brief country-by-country account of political and economic trends during the last decade and traces the changing attitude, from the high expectations on the eve of détente to the late 1960s, through the growing feeling of political and military impotence, to a new "mood of accommodation". He concludes by deploring "the willingness to let things slide instead of making the effort to reduce the risks to the survival of free institutions in Europe". E.W.

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## Paperbacks in brief

economic and social developments within, and differences between, Japan and European countries; but the conclusion makes a much-needed plea for greater mutual contact and learning concerning each other's communities, particularly on the part of Europeans. R.T.B.

BERTRAM WOLFE. *Henry VI*. 400pp. Methuen. £5.95. 0 413 52240 7. First published in 1981 by Eyre Methuen. R. L. Storey, reviewing it in the TLS (February 27, 1981) wrote "With dispassionate scholarship Bertram Wolfe provides a... sophisticated assessment. As a work of art his book deserves high praise for its well-proportioned structure and unpretentious clarity of exposition. Much learning, skilfully deployed as here, evokes pleasure as well as admiration."

POLITICS  
SAMUEL H. BEER. *Modern British Politics*. 434pp. Faber. £4.95. 0 571 18064 7. Third edition. First published in 1965. The TLS review (October 7, 1965) said "It is very tempting to predict that Professor Beer's latest book will come to be recognized as the best work on British politics to have been written since the war: the most scholarly, subtle, profound end original."

JOHN D. LEE. *The Political System of The United States*. 406pp. Faber. £5.95. 0 571 18068 X. Third edition. First published in 1969.

Psychology

JUNG. *Selected Writings*. Introduced by Anthony Storr. 477pp. Fontana. £3.95. 0 00 636415 2. Summarizing the main lines of Jung's thought in a helpful introduction, Anthony Storr offers this selection of his writings as an "attempt to distill the essential features of Jung's thought as it developed during the course of his life" to fill the eighteen robust volumes of the *Collected Works*. Dr Storr prefaces the - usually very short - extracts with brief explanatory remarks and, in the interests of representation, duly includes samples of some of the more obscure of Jung's writings. He ends with the late, sixty-page essay "The Undiscovered Self" (1957), and adds a chronology of Jung's life and work, a bibliography, and a useful glossary of key terms, such as "complex", "collective unconscious", "extraversion", "introversion", and "archetype", all of which Jung introduced into psychology. G.S.

Social History  
PHILIPPE ARIES. *The Hour of our Death*. 664pp. Penguin. £5.95. 0 14 055 163 8. The *Hour of our Death* is a celebrated if yawning study of attitudes to death, first published in French in 1977 and in English, by Knopf, in 1981. Presented as a set of variations on four main themes, it questions how human beings' attitudes to death are affected by their "awareness of self", by their concern for the "defense of society against untamed nature", by their belief in an afterlife, and by their belief in the existence of evil. Itself the work of fifteen years, it ramblingly surveys a thousand years of Western attitudes to death, beginning with a consideration of "how the knights die in the Chanson de Roland, the stories of the Round Table, and the Tristan poems", ending with a discussion of four film-documentary deaths shown on American television in 1976. G.S.

HUGH BAQAY. *hishikilane: Change and Decline in the West of Ireland*. 226pp. Jill Norman and Houghton. £3.95. 0 906908 79 5. First published in 1973 by Allen Lane. Largely by means of case histories Hugh Baqay examines the reasons for, and the effects of, the mass emigration of the population to the cities of England and America. This book was reviewed in the TLS of May 11, 1973.

D. G. CHARLTON. *France: A Companion to French Studies*. 690pp. Methuen. £9.95. 0 416 72310 1. First published in 1972, with a second edition in 1979 (reviewed briefly in the TLS of December 14, 1979). For the second edition all the chapters were

revised, and in particular all those concerned with contemporary France have been updated to include recent events and developments; the short bibliographies have been replaced by more extended bibliographical essays.

ANDREW T. SCULL. *Museums of Madness: The Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England*. 275pp. Penguin. £5.95. 0 14 08 0461 7. First published in 1979 by Allen Lane and reviewed in the TLS of January 8, 1982. The author traces the developments in the treatment of insanity from their origins in Bethlehem to the non-restraint policies of the reformers, and analyses the varying attitudes to madness.

Travel and Topography

WILKIE COLLINS. *Rambles Beyond Railways*. 195pp. Anthony Mott. 50 Stile Hall Gardens, London W4 3BU. £3.95. 0 907746 05 5. Admirers of Wilkie Collins's novels will be disappointed by his *Rambles Beyond Railways* (first published in 1851) unless possessed of a special interest in or familiarity with Cornwall. It is the record of a walking tour of that county undertaken in 1850 when it was still very remote and wild - and nooding. In Collins's opinion, promotion. Like Thoreau, Wilkie Collins championed the virtues of walking, but he was no naturalist. One might gain the impression that there is no Cornish wildlife (roaming sheep apart) and that these coasts are birdless; only the most commonly known plants are mentioned. A greater interest in geology is manifested - but this, in the case of Cornwall, is not surprising - and so Collins writes about the landscape he crossed at length, but somewhat dutifully, without any genuine feeling for it. Victorian sentimentality mars his descriptions of the waters of Loo-Pool. "Here, they ran calm and shallow into little glays, flowery creeks, that looked like fairies' bathing places." Wilkie Collins is altogether happier in those rambling writing about the bustle of inns and coastal towns, the Pichard Fishery and the Botallack Mine. A.P.

ALASTAIR FORSYTH. *Yesterday's Gardens*. 80pp. 106 black-and-white illustrations. Peter Jackson Stationery Office. £4.95. 0 11 701126 6. Peter Fowler. *Forms in England: Prehistoric to Present*. 80pp. 98 black-and-white illustrations. Her Majesty's Stationery Office. £4.95. 0 11 701130 4. These two books, published on behalf of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, are the latest in the National Monuments Record Photographic Archives Series. Previous publications have been *Hotels and Restaurants 1830 to the Present Day*, *Buildings for the Arts - New Buildings 1900-1939* and *The Garden Room*. In each book there is an introduction followed by pages of photographs (in many cases the only surviving record) from the unique collection of the National Monuments Record, accompanied by explanatory captions of a very high standard.

John Claudius Loudon, an influential mid-Victorian garden theorist, distinguished four basic varieties of garden: the Rustic, Imitating the humble cottage garden; the Picturesque, Imitating Nature; the Geometric, with the emphasis on formality; and the Gardesque, calculated to display the various arts of the Gardens. All these types, and variations on them, are illustrated in the photographs of *Yesterday's Gardens*. The book has a heavily nostalgic air about it: most of the gardens illustrated no longer exist, and the photographs themselves, being contemporary with the heyday of a particular garden, have a "lost" feel about them.

*Rambles in England* is perhaps more generally informative since its subject is wider ranging. One of its most interesting facets is revealed in the aerial photographs which show clearly the markings of prehistoric (and later) farms. Goodwood, for example, is adjacent to a strongly fortified place of the last centuries; whose ramparts surrounded the

boundaries of a Neolithic "cousin-wyed enclosure" dating from 4,000 BC. Both constructions are clearly visible in the photograph. M.F.

GEORGEY GOREK. *Africa Dances*. 218pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 00 9502 0. Originally published in 1935 by Faber, and reviewed in the TLS that year, this book is about Geoffrey Gorek's visit to French West Africa in 1933 with the dancer Fern Bonzo to study traditional tribal dances, the occasion of these highly individualized, complex and beautiful performances is, however, postponed to the later stages of *Africa Dances*. The other wonders of the book are its gallery of Conradian eccentricities, expatriates and local figures and its astonishing Manuevillian details. But Gorek, being in the company of blacks, had access to other kinds of experience, and his work contains both a lucid exposition of African religions and customs and a cumulative impression of the atrocity of French colonialism. It is hardly a well-written book, but it is extremely interesting. A.J.G.H.

RICHARD JEFFERIES. *The Life of the Fields*. 224pp. Oxford University Press. £2.95. 0 19 291358 7. These essays, first published together in 1884, were originally written as articles for newspapers and magazines. Richard Jefferies writes mostly about country matters, but occasionally turns his attention to urban landscapes; a summer day in Trafalgar Square, for example, or Paris, a city which he held in the greatest scorn. "Mind under Water" is a more typical essay, about the skill of poaching; "... experience seems to show that fish, and animals and birds certainly, recognize a man by his hat or cap, to which they have a species of superstitious dialla. ... It was noted a century ago, that wild creatures have a particular objection to a black hat. A covering to the head at all is so opposite to their own ideas that it arouses suspicion. ... The essays are part descriptive, part formative and part reflective. They move slowly, gently and refreshingly, like the country they describe. M.F.

DERVLA MURPHY. *Full Tilt*. 235pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 00752 0. *Full Tilt*, originally published in 1965 by John Murray, is one of the few modern travel books in "The Century's Travellers" series and it demonstrates that if you are sufficiently foolishly, the old days of the truly genuine journey can be recaptured. Subtitled "Trotting to India on a Bicycle", the book describes Dervla Murphy's voyage in 1963 overland from Dunikirk to Peshawar on her Armstrong Cotnam's bicycle. Roz - short for Rozinante. The author is a librarian's daughter from Co. Waterford who was released to travel at the age of thirty-one by the death of her mother, and not the least of the book's pleasures are her trenchant observations and her openness to experience. *Full Tilt* was written up from her letters and journals sent to friends and thus contains much of the authentic traveller's obsessions: weather, terrain, food and people. Some idea of the author's redoubtable attitude to the terrors of her journey may be gained from her description of an encounter at Dugubay: "Some hours later I awoke to find myself bereft of bedding and to see a six-foot, scantly-clad Kurd bending over me in the moonlight. My gun was beneath the pillow and one shot fired at the ceiling convinced the intruder. I felt afterwards that my author had showed up rather badly, in more ardent admirer of his physique, could probably have disarmed me without much difficulty." L.D.

GAVIN YOUNG. *Slow Boat to China*. 489pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 006239 4. First published by Hutchinson in 1981 and reviewed by Ian Morris in the TLS (November 27, 1981). She writes that "its breadth of sympathy and its honest 'affection' is its strongest aspect; whereas its weakness is the writing, which is not, to be frank, very interesting (and could, with advantage be cut by half)." M.F.